■ Entertainment
A 'monster' premiere or why Jlo's Marc Anthony looks familiar

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Peso bounces back to 53-$1 level due to OFW remittances

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3rd highest ranking al-Qaida leader arrested in Pakistan

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NBI raises alarm over proliferation of fake European visas

■ News / A2
Gonna in deeper hole; his entertainment firm owes gov't P13-M tax

RP's best PRs offer help to salvage GMA's image

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE COUNTRY's best sales doctors are set to tackle the image of the former administration tainted by continued administration efforts and declining approval ratings.

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Despite Iraq war, Blair favored to win UK election

LONDON—Britons began voting yesterday in a general election widely predicted to hand Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labor Party a third straight term in power, even though he has lost public trust over the war in Iraq.

Amid concerns of a repeated smash on polling day, the Foreign Office in London confirmed that two aides explosives had se-

Friday, May 6, 2005 ● 34 pages / vol. 29 / no. 147 www.inq7.net

Reason why Corpus quit

Overpriced deal was too much to take

By Amando Doronila and Jose V. Sarmiento Jr.

RETIRED Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus resigned as alternate ex-officio chair of the Natural Resources Development Corp. (NRDC) on April 27 because of an alleged corruption in a contract that seeks to replace old diesel engines of passenger jeepneys and buses with new ones.

The Engine Replacement Program is aimed at reducing air pollution to comply with the emissions standards of the Clean Air Act.

Officials close to Corpus at NRDC, the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), said he opposed a resolution backed by Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to approve a contract with a 3 Letterpeople Inc. (3EI) and Indian firm Greaves.

Since is said to be Davao's leading engine manufacturer.

The resolution was approved by the NRDC board chaired by Defensor and was tabled at a meeting shortly after Corpus was appointed on March 2, 2004.

Corpus told the NRDC board he would oppose the contract. After the session, Corpus found, according to the business source, that the engines were "overpriced four times."

3EI offered reconditioned diesel engines at $9,000 each. Corpus' sources found an engine could be purchased for $600. 3EI whose president is Albert Tan has a paid-up capital of $750,000.

3EI wanted to borrow $300 million and asked the NRDC to endorse the contract to enable it to obtain financing guaranteed by Tan

HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH: Disneyland turns 50 on Wednesday; spotlight up the sky behind Sleeping Beauty's castle in Anaheim, California, as they render dawning of its anniversary. Entertainment, p. 1

3 'influential' men suspects in newsman's slay

By PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Police are looking into the possible involvement of an unidentified number of suspects in the slaying of Radio Mindanao Network (RMN) commentator Edmundo Gonzaga in Bayog (20).

"We are eyeing several suspects ... some are influential figures who might have resorted to guns for hire or the victim's personal enemies," the PNP chief he upgraded," Supt. Andrei Adriatico, Zamboanga del Norte police chief, told the reporters in Bayog.

In Manila, Senior Supt. Isidro Lapeña, chief of Task Force Newsmen, said Chief Inspector Gonzaga's unidentified men most likely target some media practitioners on the radio. His group has been tasked with investigating attacks on journalists nationwide.

Gonzaga, 54, who hosted a radio morning program on radio dxMM, was on his way home at around 12:00 a.m. on Saturday

'His children were the people,' says Taruc son

By DJ Yap

FATHER to generations of peasants

HE WAS a good father to his only son as well as to an entire generation of peasants who shared his dream of owning the land they tilled.

That was how Dr. Ramon Taruc described his father, Luis Taruc, a legendary guerrilla leader who led the Philippine resistance against the Japanese occupation during World War II and later a failed communist rebellion in the 1950s.

The elder Taruc suffered a heart attack at home on Sunday and died at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City on Wednesday. He

Bishop: Another 'jueteng' probe resolves nothing

By Christian V. Esguerra, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Philip C. Tubeza

ANOTHER request: Another probe. And then what?

Sanjuanera Emperor Archbishop Oscar Cruz, the man who spilled the beans on "jueteng" operations, is not optimistic that

something concrete will come out of the controversy and the subsequent congressional inquiry triggered by his exposé.

"Nothing," he flatly told reporters on Wednesday.

Cruz, who had submitted to Congress a list of alleged "jueteng" operators in 28 provinces, yesterday said his reservations were based on the fact that nothing substantial had come out of similar investigations in the past.

"Besides, the national leadership does not appear to be really against jueteng although it is an illegal numbers game," he told the Inquirer.

The Inquirer obtained a copy of the "archbishop's list," which named five incumbent governors, a vice governor and a mayor as among the current top officials allegedly forking over P12 billion a year in payoffs to keep the illegal numbers game going.

While closing yesterday closed Cruz to reveal the identities of jueteng operators.

At a briefing, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said, "To be credible, the names

'Guerrilla tactics' while heat is on

By Fe Zamora

THE HEAT is on.

To elude law enforcers, "jueteng" operators have adopted "guest-like tactics" like moving the venues of the draws from house to house on their vehicles.

As an added precaution, lookouts are posted to warn the operators about "suspicious looking men with familiar hair" who could be members of police mobile teams.

The "guerrilla tactics" have been adopted since last week, according to a middle-aged bet collector in Tondo, who operates in Quezon City and parts of Caloocan.

The bettor earns P150 for the use of his property to a writer for the draws he told the Inquirer in an interview Wednesday night, while he was doing the last rounds of collecting bets for the 7 o'clock afternoon draw.

"And the draws now are faster. It's over in 15 minutes," he said.

AMERICAN CONNECTION. The President meets with US Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick (3rd from left). To his right are US Chargé d'Affaires Joseph Mussomeli and US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone. Others in the picture are members of Zoellick's party and Filipino officials, including Assistant Secretary Ariel Abadilla of the OFW's Americas desk, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. (Story on Page A2.)

Palace tells Yorac: Thanks but no thanks

By Christine Avendaño and Ricardo Pigao

MAGALAÑANG appears reluctant to take on Hardin Yorac. He resigned chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, who had earned controversy over the expenses of a group of companies set up using government funds.

Asked yesterday to comment on Yorac's questioning of the probe for the top officers of the Government Industry Investment Fund (GIF), Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang was thinking twice for her chief as chair of the PCGG. "But I believe it's time to move on," he added.

Asked whether this means that Malacañang is downplaying the economic raised by Yorac and that the government would be recovering of the funds, Bunye said "not only the coco levy fund but [also] all other offices are subject to regu-

High-living coco firm exec admits perks

By Tony S. Bergonia

THERE'S nothing wrong with spending millions of pesos of the coconut levy funds for perks and office privileges, according to the head of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF).

In an interview over radio station dzBB, Rolando A. Dolot, president and chief executive officer of the sequestered CIIF said it was true that he was given new spacious office, air-conditioned office with, and that he had spent company funds to play golf and to travel abroad for his wife.

Dolot, whom President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed to the CIIF in 2000, also admitted spending coconut levy funds for dinner and membership in golf clubs.

Asked over the program "Dobol A sa Dobol B" if he did not consider the perks immoral, although legal, Dolot simply said: "Ano ba naman? Ang sakit naman nyan. Ilang taon ako sa gobyerno nang walang kahit anong benefits, tapos ngayon, ganyan ang sasabihin nila sa akin?"

But in the same radio interview, Rolando

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, MAY 5, 2006

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Goma digs self deeper tax hole

By Bernard N. Nessen

ACTOR Richard Gomez has just dug himself a deeper hole.

In a bid to extricate himself from a nearly P100-million tax evasion case, he unwittingly gave investigators a lead to one irregularities involving his entertainment firm.

The disclosure resulted in the filing yesterday of another tax evasion case, this time against talent manager Douglas Quijano, president of Gomez's late firm Entertainment Corp.

In its complaint against Quijano before the Department of Justice, the Bureau of Internal Revenue said the Department of Finance declared that by dint of not paying P33,137,000 in taxes from 2000 to 2003.

At a press briefing, Finance Undersecretary Emmanuel Bonoan said that from 2000 to 2003, the firm's "total gross revenues was P62 million" for which it should have paid P13 million in corporate income taxes.

But in the tax returns Dante Rivera filed with the BIR, the firm claimed it had "no operations" in 2000 and 2001. In 2002 and 2003, it did not file a tax return.

Ironically, the BIR and DOF's this time Sin Bandos (BAD) program did not succeed to entangle Dante Rivera, focusing instead on Gomez's personal tax liability as a movie and television actor, model, commercial talent, product endorser and television host from 2000 to 2003.

Although he had declared that he either had no income or that he had paid taxes through his company, Gomez was able to buy a P62-million home in Forbes Park. The BOF said the

GOMEZ

BIR noted Gomez for tax evasion last month.

"Originally, the BIR was not investigating Dante Rivera. But when we filed a case against Gomez, one his defenses was that it was his company that had been paying his income tax," Bonoan said.

"Since it was Mr. Gomez who brought it up himself, there was no other course of action but to investigate [his] company," he said.

Dante Rivera was registered as a domestic corporation with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 20, 1994. Gomez owned 2,400 of its 2,500 shares of stock.

At the time of Dante Rivera's incorporation, Gomez's registered address was 1.0 Mariposa St., Barangka Drive, Mandaluyong.

In the five-page complaint, BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said that to conceal the 489-CBU, Gomez's former employee "declared that the company made payments to him [from expenses]

for talent fees of Kristine's appearing in PEARLS REVIEW over the period Jan. to 2000 2003."

Irma Pendart joins Inc. also witnessed passing the Oct. 95,375,000 for Gomez's talent fees for 2002 to 2003.

Parayno, who signed the complaint, said Gomez "failed to pay the requisite income tax returns and consequently defrauded the government income tax payable years 2002 and 2003, despite receipt of the above amounts in addition to the total professional fees paid by GMA Network Inc. during taxable year 2003 amounting to P17,024,194."

The BIR said the non-declaration and non-filing of income by Gomez's firm showed "prima facie manner of fraud with intent to evade the payment of taxes in violation" of the Tax Code.

A recent check of BIR records showed that Gomez's firm had paid taxes of P62,000 for years 2000, 2001 and 2002.

But the BIR said the payments were made in a "veiled attempt to cover up its scheme to unduly criminal liability."

"However, the same general facts and only suggested the offense already committed as not only the amount proved to be substantially compared to its real tax liability but, more so, the due appears to be corporate," the BIR said, adding that "the defect...could no longer be remedied as the crime had been consummated."

Gomez was a no show at yesterday's scheduled preliminary investigation of his tax case.

Earlier, case in the DOJ, the lawyers three sues to file his tentative affidavit until they saw the BIR complaint. Gomez was given until May 19 to file his statement. With Cynthia D. Balana

US ties reforms, anticorruption measure to aid

By Ed Cabuenga

WASHINGTON wants the Arroyo administration to put in place more effective fiscal reforms and anticorruption measures before it can sign loan due $1 billion Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), a special US aid fund initiated by President George Bush to help select countries worldwide.

US Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick said in a press conference in Manila refusing that discussions on the Philippines' access to the MCA were still in the "preliminary stage" exactly three years since the fund was launched.

He talked (with Philippine officials) about the reforms agenda on their proposal [portion, left] on the corruption aspect and fiscal reform," Zoellick said.

Zoellick said the Philippines was the second biggest recipient of US Financial assistance in Asia with $120 million a year next only to Indonesia. But the American government was still keen on giving more aid to its former colony because through the MCA would be sure on top of what the US grants through its traditional aid programs.

Zoellick explained that imposing conditions such as anticorruption good governance and the level of corruption on the disbursement of MCA aid "has meant for both recipient and donor countries."

These objective requirements ensure that these funds would not be "misspent" and reassure the American public that their money was not being wasted, Zoellick said.

All government officials you under the MCA as a sort of commission where the winners are people who live in the countries that govern wisely, that invest in their people, and that promote economic freedom.

Only 16 countries were allowed to tap the MCA last year and the Philippines is competing with 69 other countries in getting eligibility for this fund.

Ethel Custodio, foreign undersecretary for economic affairs, some officials, told reporters after Zoellick's briefing that the Philippines was aiming to get the maximum $50 million allowed for each country in the MCA.

Custodio said the government was finalizing the draft of its application for the MCA fund by including the fiscal reform measures that the government has implemented this year such as the legislation of new taxes, adopting cost-cutting measures, and reducing government subsidies.

Custodio said that the Philippines would draw up its anticorruption and governance reform programs to convince the US government that its money would not go down the drain.

Palace vows food on every Filipino's table

By Ed Cabuenga jr.

THERE will be food on every Filipino's table.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye asserted yesterday the public that President Macapagal-Arroyo remained committed to fulfilling her campaign promise of putting food on every table.

Bunye made the statement to clarify Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita's advice to the poor to "fend for themselves" and stop blaming the government for their economic woes.

"She [the President] is definitely committed to fulfill her campaign promise," said Bunye. "That is why the President's reply is to fix the economy and the believes that if investor confidence is strengthened through various reforms, there will enter new opportunities and new jobs. With new jobs, you can buy your needs such as food, clothes and housing."

Bunye said the administration was on track of meeting the President's self-imposed target of cutting the poverty level by half from 24 percent to 12 percent by the end of her term.

Putting food on every table does have the President's pledge since she ran for public office first as a senator in 1995. The late Ferdinand Jr. took a dig at the President's campaign slogan in the 2004 elections when he summed up the country's biggest problem as "breakfast, lunch and dinner."

But four years under her term, a recent Pulse Asia survey showed that a third of Filipinos did not have enough to eat every day. The same survey showed that poor Filipinos had lost their trust in government and had to resort to eating less, taking odd jobs, and borrowing money to cope with the hard times.

Reacting to the survey, Bunye said: "We cannot now inform Filipinos to work harder in their area, try to get jobs and do the best under the situation to fend for themselves."

Masbate twins may have only one heart

THE CONJOINED twins were transferred yesterday to the intensive care unit of the Philippine General Hospital after developing difficulties in breathing, according to the fund manager of the Philippine Navy, Rosalind Ocampo.

Pharm, the conjoined twins are apparently sharing only one heart, and that relies on one set of breathing that they would be separated at all.

"It was soon [through 2] who said that they might be sharing one heart," said Dawn Pang of the Red Cross, but added that doctors were still conducting more tests to double check whether there's only one heart pumping blood into the veins.

Dr. Josefina M. Antonio who is in charge of the babies, could not be reached since she is in Baba Bay attending a conference. If it is ratified through the UN vote that they have one heart, then the 'chances of the twins being separated become dim," Pang said.

A Red Cross official also said the "most we can hope for is for the babies to grow up as separated."

Born on April 29 in Mobo, Cataingan, Masbate and Angel Rhie Lagunsia are joined by the waist (with one umbilical cord).

VAT bicam a step closer to accord

By TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac

[illegible] a step closer to breaking the congressional deadlock over the value added tax bill, Sen. Ralph Recto and Rep. Jack Lapus met yesterday to draft a bicameral conference report, which proposes to retain the VAT rate at 10 percent but grants President Macapagal-Arroyo standby authority to increase it to 12 percent.

Recto and Lapus, the heads of the Senate and House ways and means committees, met for about three hours "to draft the language of the latest report," which will be presented to the committee members-ship, according to highly reliable sources.

Lapus, who earlier yesterday was blowing away and accusing the senators of engaging in a "power play" to several radio interviews, confirmed the secret meeting and was together with key staff from both chambers in Makati.

He said a joint bicameral draft report was indeed being issued out which he said was "promising to an overall meeting of minds" was achieved.

"But as usual, the answers is to obtain majority (a minimum of five of the 9 votes) approved by the bicam panel, if because there will be a reasonable by the panel, and the House Bill bill could finally be finished next week," Lapus said.

According to the sources, the draft report's salient proposals include lifting the exemptions of the power and fuel sectors, raising the corporate income tax from 32 to 35 percent, and imposing restrictions on the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

"However, the question of the no pass, or provision remains unresolved," the source said, referring to a provision in both houses and house versions which prohibits the power and fuel sectors from passing on the VAT to consumers.

A source from Recto's office said the meeting ascended by officers of congressmen and staff of the Senate Tax Study and Research Office may hold "to craft the language of the standby authority" and "support other business."

Recto, who proposed the standby authority for the President to break the deadlock, could not be reached for comment.

"Recto and Lapus had a congenial, productive, working lunch today; both expressed confidence that the proposed standby authority provision in the VAT reform bill will have majority support in both of the panels," the source said.

Bill Sen. Sergio Osmeña, a member of the bicam, claimed that until yesterday there was no consensus among the nine senators in the panel on whether to delegate standby powers to the President.

Aside from Osmeña, Senators Joker Arroyo, Manuel Villar Jr. and Jinggoy Estrada are opposed to granting such powers to the President.

Also yesterday, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. challenged the constitutionality of granting the President standby authority to raise the VAT rate.

The Constitution merely permits the President standby authority to raise or lower tariff rates or custom duties, not taxes, while Congress is in recess, said Pimentel who is not part of the bicam.

Senate President Franklin Drilon has said that granting the President such power was legal, citing provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code.

Senators Edgardo Angara and Richard Gordon agreed in principle to the proposal, but stressed that the government should improve the efficiency of its tax collection first.

Palace clips Señeres power as NLRC chief

By Cleofatre G. Avendaño and Jerome Aning

MALACAÑANG for now a hearing the fate of National Labor Relations Commission chair Rey Señeres upon Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas after the former was accused of seeking American help to destabilize the administration.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said reporters yesterday the Palace was referring to Sto. Tomas the matter of answering the Inquirer report that President Macapagal-Arroyo had confronted Señeres about his involvement in a destabilization plot against her.

"The best person to answer this is Secretary Sto. Tomas because she said she was present on one of the occasions (when Señeres supposedly discussed the plot)," Bunye said.

Señeres had said (the President) confronted him on April 5 about the plot, which he has denied.

The NLRC chief, however, just had his powers clipped.

This after Sto. Tomas vowed to implement President Arroyo's order for her to assume administrative supervision of the NLRC.

"There is already an executive order for that and the Supreme Court has not invalidated it so I will implement it, whether they like it or not," Sto. Tomas told reporters in an interview, presumably referring to NLRC officials.

Sto. Tomas, who did not comment on the accusations of destabilization against Señeres, said the Department of Labor and Employment's administrative takeover of the NLRC would help it speed up the resolution of thousands of labor cases and deal with reported corruption in the agency.

"There's a need for systems review in the NLRC. I see myself as facilitating things for them. I can't see what's wrong with that," she said.

Bunye did not want to reply to the question of whether the move taken by the President is scattering from her office to the office of the labor secretary superimpose over the NLRC had anything to do with Señeres' alleged bid to oust Ms Arroyo.

Asked if there was a move to replace Señeres, Bunye said he did not know.

"But we all know that most of the positions in government are positions of trust and confidence. And they can step down for as long as the trust and confidence are there," Bunye said.

Asked if Señeres still enjoyed the trust and confidence of the President, he said: "We don't know. That remains to be seen."

Señeres the other day said the NLRC needed more support from the government instead of more supervision. He called on Malacañang to give the agency the manpower and budget it had been asking for the past years.

The NLRC chair also said that instead of diverting her attention to the commission, Sto. Tomas could do "more good" on drastically monitoring the performance of her labor inspectors so that fewer labor cases would be filed to the NLRC.

Sto. Tomas, however, announced that 160 of the 200 labor inspectors were performing well and made nearly 22,000 inspections last year to check on companies' compliance with general labor and working standards.

Sto. Tomas said the fact that most of the NLRC were decided decisively was "not a clue on anybody" but of the nine votes were "not a consensus that anybody denies."

10 Filipinos rescued as fishing boat sinks

MAJURO—Fourteen crew were rescued Thursday after a Japanese long line fishing vessel sank off the Marshall Islands in the central Pacific.

Ten Filipinos and four Indonesians on board the Jumbo Mary Number 8 managed to launch a lifeboat before the fishing boat sank off Majuro atoll. They were picked up by a passing Chinese fishing boat about eight hours later, crew members said.

They are now in Majuro, capital of the Marshall Islands, late Thursday afternoon.

Crew members said the fishing boat started taking on water Wednesday night, forcing them to abandon ship early Thursday morning. The cause of the leak was unknown, they said. AFP

Gov't panel says it was misled by NDF on hostages

COMMUNIST rebels executed four hostages they seized in Mindanao four years ago and misled government negotiators about their fate, the government announced yesterday.

Army sergeant Jovencio Bonete and three civilians were kidnapped by New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in Bukidnon in 2001.

In a statement, the government peace negotiating panel said they learned recently that the hostages were killed by their captors the following year.

NDF assurance

It said the first was kept from the government by the NPA's political wing, the National Democratic Front, during peace talks last year.

Government negotiators, in a meeting with their NDF counterparts in Oslo in 2004, were assured that the rebels were working on the release of the hostages.

"We deplore the CPP's disregard for life and its utter lack of humanity in withholding information from the relatives of [migrant Bonete et al and the [government] about what they had done to their captives," the panel panel said.

Stalled negotiations

The killings have effectively set back "the confidence building process" that both sides were trying to build in a bid to resume stalled peace negotiations.

The communists suspended talks with the government last year, accusing the government of not doing enough to have the CPP-NPA delisted from the U.S. government's list of terrorist organizations.

The CPP has been waging a rebellion to oust the government since 1969, making it among the world's longest running communist insurgencies. AFP

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RP seaman who faked his death sent back from Brazil

By Nikko Dizon

THE FILIPINO seaman who claimed his death in Brazil to avoid repatriation to the Philippines, only to be caught by immigration officers in the airport, was deported by Brazilian authorities on Wednesday.

Allan Macaraig, 34, arrived at 3:20 p.m. on board Royal Dutch Airways flight KL 593 at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

Macaraig was escorted by two Brazilian policemen.

He will be brought to his local manning agency, Sea Pearl Services Manila Corporation, according to Emmanuel Abiñe, a representative from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), who met Macaraig at the airport.

Macaraig, aged 34, Bolinao native, is Ninoy during a routine check-up to the discovery that he had faked his death with the help of a relative and a co-worker aboard two years ago, the DFA said.

Macaraig jumped ship in November 2003 after his vessel, M/V Allure of the Seas, docked in Rio Grande do Sul.

He was reported missing until a body of a dead man washed up in a riverbank in Jaguarao, some 250 kilometers from Rio Grande do Sul a month later.

The DFA said that a relative in Cebu had reported that the body was that of Macaraig's despite investigation results that showed the dead man's fingerprints and dental records did not match those of the missing seaman.

The relative also wanted the Philippine Embassy in Brazil to ship the body back to the Philippines but refused to submit a DNA sample, as recommended by the Brazilian authorities to positively identify the remains as those of Macaraig.

A friend of Macaraig's who was a second source on the same ship, even presented bloodied clothes of the seaman to the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) office in Cebu, as well as a certification of confirming that the dead man was Macaraig.

Macaraig was discovered as he also when during the routine check in February, he presented his seaman's record book to Brazilian authorities, that stated his birthdate which matched the record on his birth certificate.

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Corrections

IN THE THIRD STAR edition of yesterday's issue, the lead paragraph of the front-page banner story "Sandiganbayan acquits Erap in Jinggoy case" misstated that Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Francisco Villaruz Jr. is retiring on May 18. Villaruz will retire on May 19.

IN ALL THREE editions of yesterday's issue, the front-page banner story entitled "Arroyo to Filipinos: Vote for peace" misspelled the name of Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez Jr. of the Diocese of Kalookan. The story also misspelled the name of Bishop Antonio Tobias as Tobiás.

IN ALL THREE editions of yesterday's issue, a caption on the front page incorrectly identified Ms. Ma. Carmelita Pineda as Ms. Carmelita Abdurahman. The photo was supplied by the Office of Media Affairs.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors involving [illegible] to the Office of the Ombudsman, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Floor, Media Center Building, Ayala Avenue corner Buendia Avenue, Makati City, or fax this to 897-2599. The e-mail address is [illegible] and the newspaper's editorial office is [illegible]. Corrections, clarifications and retractions of news stories may be sent, pending the appointment of a new ombudsman, to the Office of the Publisher, 5th floor, same address and fax numbers as those of the ombudsman, and e-mail address [illegible].

The Daily Gospel

Friday, May 6, 2005
6th Week of Easter

[illegible]

Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament while the world rejoices; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy. A woman in childbirth is in distress because her time is at hand. But when the child is born, she no longer remembers her suffering because of the joy of having been born into the world.

"You have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. When that day comes you will not ask me anything. I tell you the truth, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you."

Commentary:

[illegible]

Supreme Court Doctrines

JUDICIAL ETHICS—The competency of any adverse decision by judge of the case—because dismissal is the presumption of regularity in the performance of a judge's functions, hence bias, prejudice and even undue interest cannot be presumed, specially weighed against a judge's sacred obligation to administer justice without partiality without respect to any person and to equal right to the poor and to the rich, is consecrated by the court, it was held that mere allegations of bias are not enough to the absence of clear and convincing evidence to overcome the presumption that the judge will undertake his noble role to dispense justice according to law and evidence and without fear or favor. There should be clear and convincing evidence to prove the charge of bias and partiality because evidence is required to establish bias, bad faith, malice or corrupt purpose, in addition to the palpable error that must be inferred from the decision or order itself. Although the decision may serve as evidence or to infer doubt concerning a judge's integrity, absent evidence to the contrary, the decision itself cannot be considered to establish a case against the judge. (Gutierrez-Gutierrez) Decision (Chief Executive, Second Division, Manuel M. Martinez Foundation, Inc. vs. Pizarro, A.M. No. RTJ-04-1793, January 14, 2005)

Asi presents new papers to Wycoco

By Margaux C. Ortiz

TSUJIDE

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2011 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER A1

SPORTS

Cebuana Lhuillier pulls out of BAP commitment

By Mycaag R. Cavallo

CEBUANA Lhuillier pulled the plug on the Basketball Association of the Philippines, but will not resign on its patriotic duty of supporting the sport.

The guest yesterday company assistant PIX president Jose "Pepoy" Concepcion said supporting the squad which will be formed by the powerful basketball committee after putting an end to the BAP program that started four years ago.

Jose Mari Lhuillier, who manages operations of the family-owned pawnshop empire, personally gave the assurance to Concepcion in a meeting in the former Congressman's house Wednesday night.

"The Lhuillier family feels that it is their patriotic duty to continue supporting the sport, not the BAP," said Concepcion spokesperson Joey Romasanta.

The pull-out was triggered by the negative publicity surrounding the BAP team in the last installment, including the debacle it suffered in the National Basketball Conference in La Presidente 400.

This development comes as a big blow to the BAP, which is desperately trying to maintain control of the basketball program over Southeast Asian tournaments later this year.

The BAP came out of a snake-pit fourth meeting yesterday morning and it still an owner of the Lhuillier decision.

Members of the BAP board agreed to continue forming their own team, at the same time that Chot Reyes from the basketball committee's selection, and will bet for a combination of both squads.

Sir Tony Kok, special assistant to Campaign, declared the BAP meeting in the hope of ending the controversy.

Mindanao still 'a dangerous situation,' says US official

A GUERNICA-size departure official wondered said that while Mindanao remains "a dangerous situation" because of the fairly low-scale communist terror groups and the Muslim insurgency there, it was in no immediate danger of becoming a new Afghanistan.

Robert Zoellick, the US deputy secretary of state, spoke to reporters in Malacañang after meeting President Macapagal-Arroyo about US plans for the region and getting an update on the peace efforts in Mindanao.

Zoellick informed he saw the situation as "very different" from Joseph Mussomeli, the outgoing US Embassy charge d'affaires who caused an uproar in Congress and the media last month when he suggested that investors and overseas poverty could turn Mindanao into the next Afghanistan.

"Having visited [the areas in Mindanao] 15 or 20 years ago when I was in the state department in 1985, I think there is some progress being made," said Zoellick, who left last night to continue his tour of Southeast Asian nations.

He said the US was appreciative of government efforts to integrate into "development and reform" the members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which concluded a peace pact with the government in 1996.

He praised the Philippines for bringing the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front to the negotiating table and pursuing strong anti-terrorism legislation.

But he noted that while peace talks with the MILF were under way, "there's fragmentation among those parties and there are links to the groups that have broader international reach."

"The best way to defeat them is a combination of political, economic, and military and that's what some in my circle have said I know to learn the strategy of the government of the Philippines," Zoellick said.

The US official said fighting terrorism would be "a long struggle... but I think it can't be learned, we can't have it a country of sanctuaries, some terrorist, some informed."

He said part of the challenge was to "open the doors of opportunity and hope for segments of population that can be training-ground, right there, it's from the MILF, leaders and that's been down the brutal killers."

Asked whether there were links between then-ground Southeast Asian terror network, the Jemaah Islamiyah, and the MILF, Zoellick said: "There has been a connection in the past but I think quite definitely the way to avoid support is by working closely with the Philippine government."

"There's a misdirected badly destructive group of people who are motivated by hate and wanting to stop democracy freedom and economic modernization and these people would never be reintegrated into any of a group of other people that might have been countries or objectives," he said.

Ignatius groups from the MILF are believed to be forging links with the Al Hamadiya a string of deadly attacks in the region, including the 2002 Bali bombing that killed more than 200 people.

Several suspected militants linked to the MILF have told government prosecutors that the Al helped fund bombing attacks in Manila in 2000 that killed several dozen people.

Cherrie Lyne Arambulo and agencies

MILF agrees to mediate on MNLF breakaway rebs

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is willing to persuade armed rebels loyal to detained leader Nur Misuari to stop the three-month-old fighting in Sulu, a military spokesperson said yesterday.

Lt. Col. Ramonsonar Pascual, Armed Forces public information chief, said the MILF leadership had agreed to mediate between the military and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) fighters to end hostilities.

"The MILF is willing to inform the public of the MILF effort and assurance in talking to members of the Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG) for the resolution of conflict in Sulu province," Pascual said.

He said Brig. Gen. Ruben Ibañez, ex-chief of the Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG) who is on the payroll of Southern Command, was the president of Southern, had denied reports that the MILF had pulled forces with armed leaders of Misuari, former leader of the MILF.

"There is no truth to the report of MILF and MILF joining forces. [General Ibañez] said he had clarified this matter with the MILF. The MILF leadership is offering assistance to mediate and reconcile the conflict with the MBG in Sulu," said Pascual.

Unofficially, fierce skirmishes between government troops and combined forces of the MILF headed by Habier Malik and the Abu Sayyaf under Commander Radullan Sahiron broke out in Sulu, after the Malacañang-Sahiron-Misuari-the military for the capture of Misuari and his men.

Nearly 40 soldiers and an estimated 70 to 100 rebels have died since then.

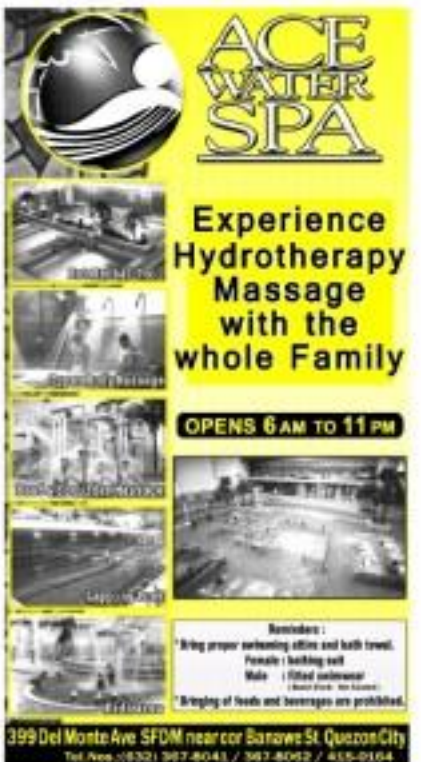
Thousands of soldiers remain deployed in various parts of Sulu to hunt for the rebel bases.

Pascual's statement came on a time when the government and the MILF have resumed peace negotiations aimed at ending the decades-old separatist rebellion in Mindanao.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please take notice that on September 12, 2002, our client Jardine Land Inc. ("JLI") foreclosed real property covered by TCT Numbers RT-71869, RT 71870 and RT 71873 ("Property") registered in the name of Unlad Resources Development Corporation ("Unlad") located at EDSA corner Thomas C. Benitez Street, Quezon City. Upon failure by Unlad and the Philippine Women's University (as mortgagors) to redeem the Property, JLI consolidated title thereon. JLI intends to obtain possession of the Property immediately. Regrettably, upon JLI's taking of possession, the present school operations on the premises will not be permitted.

BERNAS LAW OFFICES
By **JOSE A. BERNAS**



RP VICTIMS' AGES UNKNOWN

Aussie escapes child sex charges

SYDNEY, Australia—Prosecutors on Thursday dropped six charges against an Australian man accused of having sex with underage girls in the Philippines because a judge ruled the alleged victims' ages could not be proved.

Ronald Mervin Ring, 50, was due to stand trial in Sydney's Downing Centre this week on seven charges, including having sex with a girl younger than 16 and engaging in child sex tourism, which is a crime in Australia.

But Judge Joe Gibson ruled inadmissible evidence that prosecutors said proved the two alleged victims were underage. Prosecutors said they couldn't prove the case without the birth-certificate evidence.

Ring pleaded guilty to one charge of importing child pornography and was ordered to remain in custody until he is sentenced on July 1. It was not immediately clear what maximum penalty he faces.

Ring was arrested after being found with two girls in his room at the Cherry Blossom Hotel in Manila on June 15 last year. Filipino detectives Delfin Cruz Gilos told the court.

Nude photographs of the girls taken by Ring before his arrest were presented to the court as evidence.

Prosecutors were relying on the photographs and the expert opinion of a pediatrician—who testified at a pretrial hearing the girls were likely aged between nine and 13—to prove the two girls were underage.

The child pornography charge stemmed from a roll film Ring was carrying as he returned to Sydney from the Philippines that contained pornographic images of children. AP

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The NRDC Engine Replacement Program

By Angelica Salud
MEDC Foundation

By 2001, National Resources Development Corp. (NRDC) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines (Jeepdap) and Philippine Engine Rebuilding and Manufacturing Corp. (PERMC) for the financing of the replacement of diesel engines of passenger jeepneys.

Aging diesel engines had been identified as the single largest mobile source of air pollution in violation of the Clean Air Act. The DEP aims to provide jeepney drivers with viable alternatives to an outright phaseout or an ban to disrupt their means of livelihood. At the same time, the alternatives should be in compliance with environmental laws.

Under the MOA, the government through NRDC would finance the acquisition and sale of reconditioned diesel engines to replace the engines of jeepneys. Priority for the retrofitted 200,000 members nationwide, 15,000 of whom are in Metro Manila. The Engine Replacement Program (ERP) is intended to be expanded to include not just the members of Jeepdap, but all jeepney associations nationwide and, eventually, even bus groups.

Due to lack of funds on the part of NRDC, the ERP was discontinued.

In 2003, A. T. Investments Inc. (ATI) made a proposal to take over the financing of the ERP in partnership with Isuzu, Europe's leading engine manufacturer. Under ATI's proposal, it would take on the burden of financing the jeepneys by selling to Jeepdap's members brand new diesel engines, as opposed to reconditioned engines, on installment basis.

The terms of the loans to jeepney drivers were for three years at an interest of 12 percent per annum, at the price of P120,000 per engine.

In February 2005, ATI's proposed new MOA was approved by the NRDC board of directors chaired by retired Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus.

The following were the advantages of the new MOA: (1) Government would no longer be the lender; instead, NRDC as implementer and arm of the Department of Environment and Natural resources would be the agency in charge of implementing the ERP in compliance with the Clean Air Act. (2) The banks would now be ATI, a privately owned corporation with experience in the construction of automotive plants and engine replacements.

(3) ATI and Isuzu would establish a world-class engine replacement plant in the country. (4) NRDC makes no commitment that ATI's application for a guarantee cover from Trade and Investment Development Corp. (also known as Philguarantee) would be approved. (5) The NRDC board of directors specifically discussed that ATI should promote and facilitate collateral for the guarantee being sought.

Under the foregoing factual premises, the project under the new MOA was approved by the NRDC board of directors on its merits.

Reason why Corpus quit

Viewpoints A11

coup Theater and Investment Development Corp., which is also owned by Enrile, Inquirer Upstart Capital Agency), a government financing institution, according to the source.

Talkoop is the former Philippine Export and Loan Guarantee Corp. (PHILGUARANTEE).

Corpus quit four months after he was appointed as the "principal overseer of all reformation programs of the government institutions."

Enrile, 80, said in his brief resignation letter—following the April 22 resignation of Hayden Kono, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government—that he wanted to "spend more time with my family."

But the business learned that his sudden resignation was provoked by a run-in with Defensor over a project that had nothing to do with reformation.

P16M allowed

When the resolution was encountering opposition in the board, NRDC president Angelica Salud, said to be concerned with Defensor, talked to Noel Lucada, who was helping Corpus on a reformation program...the Income assistance.

The source said Lucada informed Corpus that Salud had allegedly allowed P16 million "to approve the project."

When Corpus heard this, he became more adamant about disapproving it. Salud told Lucada that "no honeymoon on this a dollar (presumably referring to Defensor), according to the source.

Other sources say that NRDC board are "transportation" Secretary Leandro Mendoza, Trade Secretary Juan Santos, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, Investments Bank of the Philippines Chair Wilfredo Sebastian and Public debt general Rosario Bree. Bree refers to the National Economic and Development Authority.

No pressure

Salud denied yesterday affirming P16 million. Lucada was not available for interview despite repeated telephone calls.

"There was no pressure on General Corpus by me or by his Defensor," Salud told reporters when

RP's best PRs offer help to salvage GMA image

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye was quick to dismiss the rumors that President Macapagal-Arroyo was seeking help from the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) because she was disappointed with the performance of her official publicists. Bunye said the PRSP's offer to make its services available, its organizational machinery, its collective talent and its international network as the country's public relations guild are achieved true for free.

"The support is unsolicited but this is very welcome. We need the support and assistance of all sectors," Bunye said in a briefing.

In an interview, PRSP president Amylyn C. Bocobo-Quiroz said the group would provide the government with free seminars and training and allow its members "established PR strategies."

For the country

"We'd like to be of help as PR professionals. We're doing it for the country because for the past years we have been having a bad press. Since we are committed to our service ethic, we believe PRSP can be relevant," Ze Quiroz said.

The PRSP submitted its "Declaration of Support for Building the Economic and Investment Image of the Government's Development Initiatives" to the President during the induction of its new officers in Malacañang yesterday.

The 43-year old PRSP describes itself as a "national organization of 150 professionals with wide domestic and international contacts with a variable of experience in enhancing reputation and building image."

New media agency

The PRSP's offer to lend a hand to enlarge the Arroyo administration's battered image came less than 12 months after the President overhauled Malacañang's PR machine by re-promoting a new body, the Office of the Communication Director (led by Silvestre Bello), over the existing Palace media apparatus.

The OCD oversees the operations of Bureau (or press secretary and spokesperson), Getaway Broadcasting Corporation (government-owned radio and television stations) and Newsweek Bureau (chief of the Philippine Information Agency).

Record-low popularity

The new media unit of Malacañang, which has a combined budget of P600 million this year, has done little to shore up the President's popularity, which has fallen to a record low since her election in May 2004.

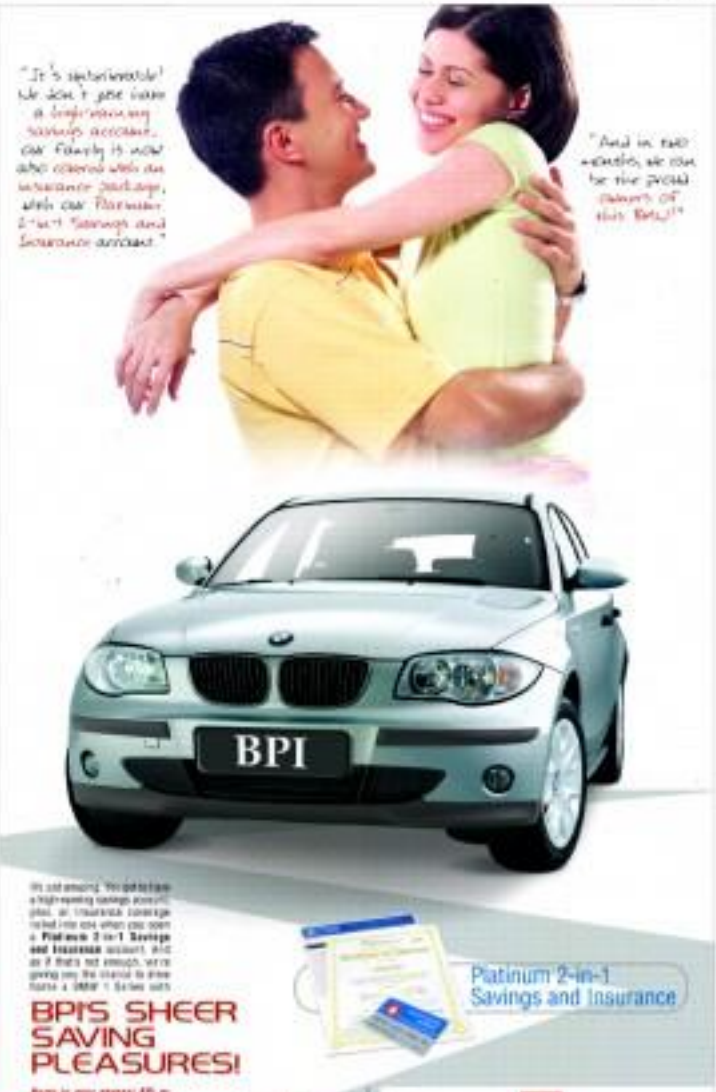
The President has long been frustrated with the inability of her PR people to convey to the public what she has done in terms of uplifting the lives of Filipinos. This was the reason she overhauled Malacañang's media machinery.

The PRSP itself declared in its statement that "the global community has yet to fully appreciate these initiatives [of the President in socio, political and economic development] that would result in more investments confidence and in the economy inflows."

Dr Quiroz is assured that PRSP's offer should not be taken negatively.

Bunye refused to say whether his office and the Malacañang media machine were communicating the good news to the public about the President's achievements. He also did not say if the President was satisfied with their performance.

"This is a continuous effort, we are committed to the our work in trying to explain the programs and policies of the President and the media's administration. Even in a corporate setup, the CEO or COO, who is not running for office, still has to communicate the aims of the organization down the line," Bunye said.



The WORLD

Edito Lorenzo B. Suarez

Al-Qaida's 3rd ranking leader captured

ISLAMABAD—The capture by Pakistani forces of al-Qaida's alleged chief operational but reluctant leader Abu Faraj al-Libbi, the group's third-ranking leader, was a key role in the terror network, according to a copy of a classified US Central Intelligence Agency fax seen by AFP.

The CIA list of most wanted men dating from last year put al-Libbi at number three after Bin Laden and his Egyptian deputy Ayman Al-Zawahiri, calling him the "newly reported chief of external operations for al-Qaida."

It says he has a $5-million bounty on his head and goes on to describe him as "senior" al-Qaida operations commander and personal assistant of Bin Laden."

Pakistan announced on Wednesday that it had captured the Libyan national after a brief shootout two days earlier in the northwest of the country. He was also Pakistan's most wanted man.

Security officials said they believe al-Libbi has been in contact with Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, whose whereabouts remains a mystery more than two years after a US-led invasion toppled the Taliban, then based in neighboring Afghanistan.

US and Pakistani officials have said they believe the pair are hiding in the mountainous border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan, but there has been no sign of either.

"Al-Libbi is one of Bin Laden's closest confidants and he should be able to provide new leads about Zawahiri and Ayman Al-Ghwadiri," a senior security official involved in the al-Qaida operations in Pakistan said on condition of anonymity.

Information Minister Sheikh Rashid said al-Libbi was being interrogated by Pakistani security forces at an undisclosed location.

US President George W. Bush welcomed al-Libbi's capture, calling it "a critical victory" in the global war on terrorism declared by Washington after Bin Laden's terrorists carried out the Sept. 11 attacks.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the arrest underlined Pakistan's resolve to tackle against terrorism. Pakistan had put a reward of 20 million rupees ($333,333) for al-Libbi's arrest.

Officials said al-Libbi took over Al-Qaida operations in Pakistan after the arrest in March 2003 of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the key planner of Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on United States and the network's former third in command.

"Through Khalid Sheikh Mohammed we learnt that Abu Faraj was very alert and kept-fit. Libbi should take up further," the official said.

Military leader Musharraf has previously named al-Libbi as the ringleader in the attempts to assassinate him in December 2003.

In the first, militants blew up a road bridge as he drove past while the second happened on Christmas Day when suicide bombers detonated their vehicles near his motorcade, killing more than a dozen.

Police sources said the militants were captured in a dramatic gunfight after he and another man riding a motorcycle near a shrine in the town of Mardan were intercepted on an intelligence tip-off. AFP

AL-LIBBI in unusual pose

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Berlusconi: Blame cannot be excluded in agent's death

ROME— Premier Silvio Berlusconi said Tuesday that he disagreed with some of the US military's conclusions in the March shooting death of an Italian agent in Baghdad.

But he said those differences would affect Italy's friendship with Washington or its deployment of Italian troops in Iraq.

Berlusconi differed with the major conclusions by US military investigators into the March 4 shooting death of Nicola Calipari by US soldiers. The premier contended that the checkpoint wasn't properly marked and that responsibility for the tragic incident was not clear.

"The absence of definitiveness doesn't at all diminish our blame," Berlusconi told lawmakers in the Chamber of Deputies, three days after Italy issued its own report concluding that inexperience and fatigue played a role in the fatal shooting.

The shooting, in well the American countries that the soldiers bore no responsibility for the death of the agent, angered Italians. Calipari had just left talks with Iraqi kidnappings and was escalated efforts.

Italians largely opposed the war in Iraq, and the US countries, were stocked up pressure Berlusconi to bring home Italy's 3,000 troops.

But Berlusconi reaffirmed Thursday that the troops deployment would continue.

"We have an intention of establishing any connections between the assassination of the US soldiers are official but his life and the role of our country in Iraq," the conservative premier said. AP

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40 Taliban dead in bloody Afghan fighting

KABUL—Forty suspected Taliban rebels were killed in a battle with US and Afghan troops, the US military said Thursday, doubling the toll from the bloodiest firefights since the regime installed a spring offensive.

Initial reports said only 20 militants died in the clash on Tuesday in southeastern Zabul province, along with an Afghan police officer, while six US servicemen and five Afghan police were injured, the US military said.

"Today, further reports indicate that the toll is going up to 40 for rebels," said Lt. Cindy Moore, a US coalition spokesperson.

The clash in the troubled district of Deh Chopan was sparked when militants helicopter-dropped near local doctors and police tried to free them, Afghan interior minister Ali Ahmed Jalali said.

"Finally the three doctors were freed safely," he added.

US warplanes and gunships helicopters were also called in to help the troops on the ground, the US military said.

The renewed Taliban militant drive has left at least 130 insurgents and 11 police dead as the weather has become warmer in past one month, Jalali said.

One Afghan policeman was killed in another clash between militants and Afghan and coalition forces on Wednesday, the interior ministry spokesperson Lutfullah Mashal said. AFP

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Mistrial declared in abuse court-martial

ENGLAND

FORT HOOD, Texas—A judge declared a mistrial Wednesday at the court-martial of Lynndie England, the U.S. soldier who became the face of the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal, after her rejected her guilty plea.

The judge, Col. James Pohl, told England he was obliged to "listen and see" after Charles Graner, the alleged ringleader in the abuse, testified that he had ordered England to hold a leash that was tied around the neck of a naked Iraqi prisoner.

That was just one of many statements made during a sometimes bizarre day, which concluded a seven-statement England made at part of her plea bargain.

"I know that is hard on you, but that is what is going to happen," Pohl said.

The case has been returned to the US military authorities.

Publication of photos of England leading the prisoner on a leash and pointing at the genitals with a pile of naked prisoners led to widespread condemnation of US practices in Iraq at a time when US forces were trying to keep the country under control after the 2003 invasion.

Pohl instructed to have dismissed the 22-year-old reservist's declaration of guilt from the first day of trial.

He reportedly warned her against having entered his "outside interests" and told her that she should not plead guilty if she did not believe her actions were wrong at the time.

While Graner has never been any doubt over whether England was present during the abuse—the photos were shown around the world—the critical question was whether she conspired to commit the leaps.

For the conspiracy charge to stick, both England and Graner had to have believed at the time that their actions were wrong.

In her initial statement to Pohl, England said she thought it was okay to hold a prisoner by a leash because she was told to do it by Graner, a military police officer and former prison guard. England did not work in the prison and was three ranks below him.

It was only after Pohl asked her to reconsider her guilty plea and gave her time to consult her lawyers that England said she had always known her actions were wrong.

When Graner declared that he told the leash around the prisoner because it was "the safest way to get the prisoner out of there," Pohl halted the testing.

In endorsing his decision to declare a mistrial, Pohl said: "You can't have it one person complain."

Graner, who is reported to have married another soldier charged in the scandal, Megan Ambuhl, was facing England at the time of the abuse and is the father of her seven-month-old son.

Of the eight soldiers charged over the Abu Ghraib scandal, only Graner's case has gone to trial. He is currently serving a 10 years term. AFP

50 YEARS OF DISNEYLAND
Visitors watch as fireworks rise over the Sleeping B
4, during the premiere of "Buzz under... Dream C
presented for Disney's 50th anniversary.

Prosecution rests
trial; defense rea

SANTA MARIA, California—Michael Jackson's lawyers were set to argue Thursday the pop star should be acquitted, but also cranked to bring in an all-star cast of witnesses now that the prosecution rested its case.

Among the first scheduled to take the stand as a defense witness is former child star Macaulay Culkin, of "Home Alone" fame, who is widely expected to drop a bombshell that Jackson never fondled him.

But first, Jackson's lawyers will try to convince Judge Rodney Melville the "King of Pop" should walk free right now.

On Thursday morning they are set to argue that their client should be acquitted of all 10 charges against him.

The motion for acquittal they filed Wednesday claims that the "inherently improbable" testimony by the alleged victim and his younger brother "did not establish substantive evidence" that Jackson fondled the two 13-year-old boy-and-revered him allowed two years ago.

But the lawyers focused mainly on getting the extraordinary acquittal of a charge that he conspired to hold the boys and his family against their will.

Prosecutors claim Jackson and his aides wanted to hold them captive until they agreed to keep the singer's name. Following broadcast of a damaging documentary that showed the entertainer and his future accuser holding hands.

In its motion, the defense argued that Tom Sneddon, the district attorney of California's Santa Barbara county who leads the prosecution, had not

Cover-up in ex-foo

WASHINGTON—The US Army determined days after Army Ranger Pat Tillman's 2004 death in Afghanistan that the former professional football player had been killed by friendly fire, but kept it secret for weeks and even destroyed evidence, Army officials said on Wednesday.

A 1,400-page report by Brig. Gen. Gary Jones of the Army Special Operations Command found that the Army did not tell his family or the public that Tillman had been killed accidentally by fellow Rangers until weeks after his nationally televised memorial service, officials said.

At the time, the army's public account of Tillman's death on April 22, 2004, in a remote canyon near the Pakistan border indicated he had been shot by enemy fire during an ambush.

Tillman walked away from his lucrative National Football League career to join the military along with his brother in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. He was widely hailed as a hero and role model.

Jones' findings, first reported by The Washington Post and confirmed by army officials, stated three enlisted soldiers of the scout unit fired 60 rounds in 10 minutes from the spot it was friendly fire.

An initial Army investigation determined within days that Tillman was shot by US soldiers, and an investigator accused those who fired on him of "gross negligence," Jones found.

The day after his death, US personnel located Tillman's bloody body across the valley, which Jones called the destruction of evidence. Army officers also instructed soldiers knowledgeable about the incident to keep quiet for four the more details would leave the trade, the report found.

"Leading the Ranger platoon signed by his own valley, Tillman was shot and killed while leaving his efforts on the elimination of the enemy forces and the protection of his team members," Army Special Operations Command said in a public statement on April 30, 2006, several days after Army investigators had established friendly fire as the cause.

(Reuters)

ANSUL FIRETRUCK

Beauty Castle at Disneyland in Anaheim, CA Fri
ween Days," the new fireworks and light show

AFP

India launches two satellites

SRIHARIKOTA, India—An Indian rocket blasted off Thursday, carrying the country's ambitions to be a major global space power and two satellites that it launched into orbit.

The liftoff in southeastern India marked the first time India had launched a rocket with two satellites aboard and touched off another achievement in its ambitious space program in mid a probe to the moon by 2007 or 2008.

The launch "reaffirms the emergence of India as a major space power," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told parliament in New Delhi.

The 44-meter (Nine-)satellite Launch Vehicle carrying mission carrying satellite whose detailed imaging is aimed at assisting every Indian household on the map and another for South Asian home radio operators that can be used during disasters such as earthquakes and floods.

AFP

case in Jackson
dies all-star cast

lawsuits to support his claims.

"The district attorney has failed to present sufficient evidence of a conspiracy," it said.

"There have been no witnesses who established Mr. Jackson's personal role in any alleged conspiracy," it stated.

Legal experts said the conspiracy count was clearly the weakest part of the prosecution's case.

"It may very well be that the judge will grant an acquittal on the conspiracy," said Craig Smith, a criminal prosecutor who has been following the case.

Melville was also at risk on the basis of several motions for mistrial and another defense motion to dismiss the charges.

He was also due to decide whether to accept a number of documents the prosecution wants to file as evidence.

The judge has made it clear the defense should be ready to bring in its first witness as soon as there is case are resolved—and subject to his ruling on the motions.

In addition to Cotton, two musicians could appear for the defense in the coming days. All three are expected to deny claims by earlier witnesses that Jackson handed them wines they mixed his beverages(fourth man) than a decade ago.

The defense list of possible witnesses includes dozens of the less known names in the entertainment world, including seven divo Elizabeth Taylor, singer Jermaine Jackson and basketball star Kobe Bryant.

AFP

tball star's death

TILLMAN

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OPINION

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SOS

EDITORIAL

IF ONLY it could simply wave a magic wand and lower gas prices tomorrow; I'd do that," US President George W. Bush was quoted as saying recently.

That is, of course, every leader's wish, except maybe for those whose countries are major oil producers. But if the leader of the world's only remaining superpower can just swing his hand to helplessness and frustration as oil prices skyrocket in the face of heightened demand from the fast-growing giant economies of China and India, what can the president of a small, impoverished nation, whose government is drowning in debt, possibly do?

Bring oil prices down, that's what, according to three Catholic bishops and their colleagues in the multisectoral group, Kilusang Mahabaonang Tkonomiya. And not only that, the government should also cut salary and power rates and stop imposing new taxes at the same time.

Unless the administration acts on these demands, people will "threaten for change and see current step down," Cubao-ase Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez said. "We might even ask for such changes for the good of the country," Bishop Julio X. Labayen warned that "to force us out, can even stop the coming deluge of change as the pent-up emotions of our poor suffering people (are) about to explode." Should President Macapagal-Arroyo ignore their demands, they plan to declare a "national day of mourning and protest" on June 12 and call for an "immediate change in system."

Now, wouldn't it be grand if Ms Arroyo could just wave a magic wand and bring oil prices down? She would need one with stronger magic powers since the three bishops and their allies also want to cut water and electric rates. And while she is at it, why not slash as well the prices of food products and other essential commodities, cut transport costs and raise the wages of workers and the salaries of employees? Then we may no longer need bishops since we would have heaven right here on earth.

The problem is there is no magic wand. The other problem is that the three bishops and their group apparently have not thought out their position thoroughly. If pump prices are going to be lowered, for instance, then the government will have to cover the difference while world oil prices remain way up there. So where is it going to get the money for the subsidy? The government is deep in debt and has a perennial budget deficit. Raise taxes? That is anathema to the EME. Borrow? Who is going to lend money when a key proposal of the group is debt repudiation? Of course, a debt repayment moratorium will free hundreds of billions of pesos. But a default declaration by the country's international creditors will be nothing short of disastrous for the economy.

Maybe a change in system or leadership would bring about such needed economic relief to our suffering poor? But exactly what new system are the bishops and their friends talking about? And who do they propose to lead us to the promised land? Is it Vice President Noli de Castro, since he is Mr Arroyo's constitutional successor? Is it one of the bishops?

Former Defense Secretary Bartolome Abut and his group, who preceded the bishops in calling for regime change, at least are clear on who will run their proposed transition government. If the disgraced former president is to be believed, they want Joseph Estrada to head the junta, which can be presumed to have a good number of retired generals as members.

On the other hand, all the KMB leaders would say at this point is that once they drive Ms Arroyo out of power, they can sit down and "consultations" merely serve as "spadework." And then think the new rulers will welcome having others people looking over their shoulders? How naive can some people get? Somebody should save them from their delusions.

Who will save us from our saviors?

New pope's challenge

FOREIGN COMMENT

THE ELECTION of Joseph Ratzinger as the new pope has been met with both joy and trepidation.

Besides 265 major controversies with all churches, and the bigger with all religions, right-and-wrong bridge building in a global level world. If we are to judge by his past, he will also carry on the late pope's unwavering view of women and homosexuality, his hardlined opposition to contraception and abortion, as well as his determined defense of celibacy.

Questions like these put the church at odds with widespread beliefs in the West and have caused a scourge of priests in many places. The big challenge will be for the cardinals to reveal, another controversial in a way that make the church luminous in human values and beliefs more relevant for more people than today.

@hotmail.com (Oslo, Norway)

Public transports already overcharging passengers

AS I SEE IT

Noel B. Cruz

SOMETIMES—but only sometimes—the people who run, but find that is in the statements the other day by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board that there will be no fare increases yet. For the drivers of public transportation have gotten used to the notion that, like Lolo, whatever they say, they do.

They already have a formula to get it from point. First, they demand that the prices of diesel and gas be rolled back. Of course, it will not be rolled back. So they ask for fare hikes. Then they build enough time to cancel the hike in the hours of the LTFRB and the commuters. After the strike, they go in force to the LTFRB hearings and argue for increases in fares, and they argue the LTFRB, now chastened, is inclined to grant an increase.

The first time, however. They will still really the documents submitted as there by both sides, the petitioners and the opposers, and LTFRB Chief Atty. Glenda Basilio.

Commissioner are sometimes misleading. But the LTFRB is only fair to use the powers of observation to come to conclusion that neither fare increase is due, repeat due, justified.

Look at the buses in Edsa. They're bumper-to-bumper on the whole stretch of Edsa, with only a few passengers each. Some seats the drivers have been removed with only passengers, especially during rush hours.

Look at the jeepneys in their terminals. They stay there longer than the time they spend making rounds. The drivers actually spend more time sleeping in their jeepneys or eating snacks at the nearby hawker than driving.

With the dearth of passengers for buses and too few trips for jeepneys, one would think that they would have gone out of business already. In fact, they are what we so-called self-fix experts (thanks to Inquirer columnist Ed Lingao) call fats for competition, buses and jeepneys would be forced to phase themselves out. No such thing happened. On the contrary, the number of jeepneys is still so thick as ever on Edsa and Taft avenues. And there are even more buses plying Edsa now.

LTFRB's flawless said that even franchised commercial buses are operating in some areas in Edsa. Buses are in demand in the provinces where there is a shortage of cars, so why would the operators and drivers of franchised provincial buses choose to operate as crippled Edsa where there is a shortage of passengers?

What are you complaint from you is that the Edsa route, despite too many buses and too few passengers, is still a very profitable route. Were it not, the bus companies would have gone bankrupt a long time ago or shifted to other routes. The LTFRB is ready to grant their fare increases so other lines reopened routes. The only explanation they've still on Edsa is that they still make money on the route.

And the fact that they still make a profit despite the lack of passengers can only mean that they are overcharging their passengers.

The same is true with the jeepneys. With the fewer trips and passengers, one would think the drivers would not be able to pay the bound, ate and still take home enough for his family. Why would anybody spend day in and day out driving a jeepney if he could not earn a decent living? How could he make enough with the dearth of trips and passengers?

Like the buses, they must be overcharging their passengers.

With the suspending how often and how generous the fare increases in the past were, it is not surprising that commuters are losing taith in LTFRB—literally and figuratively.

If there were bus lanes and jeepneys in Metro Manila, there also would be less traffic mess more and fares because there would be more passengers per unit. And traffic would move faster because there would be less of them crawling on the streets to compete for the few passengers.

Transportation officials put taxes to look out of their offices windows and see those buses and jeepneys crawling bumper-to-bumper on the crowded streets...each with few passengers—to realize that there are just too many of them. It is elementary that to ease traffic congestion, there must be fewer vehicles on the road—especially those with few passengers.

Every year, we add thousands of new vehicles, clogged our by-the-hour overused car and motorcycle companies, but not few of them are phased out. In the Philippines, once a vehicle gets out of the factory, it runs forever. Look at the jeepneys. They are a byproduct of World War II, but they're still running until now, thanks to the ingenuity of Filipino artisans.

There are already too many franchised jeepneys and buses, jeepneys and tricycles in Metro Manila. The permits LTFRB granted franchises earlier at the franchising days in.

The present LTFRB chief agrees that some of them have to be phased out. She also admits that plenty of colorums are added to the fray. Some operators and those cannot be removed out.

Well, in the first place, many of the buses are already out and their franchises expired; then each unit should not be older than a certain number of years. Many of them are already over-aged and their franchises should not be renewed. The franchises also say that they must serve the public faithfully and that joining strikes and boycotts would be a cause for cancellation.

Jeepneys are even older, and their drivers earn million less often. So why doesn't the LTFRB cancel their franchises?

Mr Ramirez said they have to follow due process. So follow it and make it quick. And what about the colorum vehicles? It's quite easy to catch them—if there is a will. But is there?

'No man, no problem'

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

JOSEPH Stalin said: "Some are more powerful than guns. We would not let our enemies have guns, why should we let them have ideas?" Totalitarians, he concluded with the now-famous quotation: "Death solves all problems—no man, no problem."

Obviously, that remark was made famous all over again by an American conservative, addressing the graduating class of the Liberty Supreme Court. The Court had issued a ruling forbidding capital punishment for juveniles, and Justice Antonin Scalia dissented that its majority—by court an international human rights treaty to support his decision. In reference entitled Remedies to Judicial Tyranny, lawyer author Edwin Vieira told a Washington, D.C. gathering that Justice Scalia's should be imprisoned for upholding "naive principles drawn from foreign sources," and pretended to quote—for authority—Joseph Stalin!

How appalling that the Philippines now contains long as the world's "most intellectual country" for journalists. We are a free and open democracy, and the Constitution guarantees the freedom of the press, while Iraq is in a state of siege and is under foreign military occupation. Following Iraq is also full of chaotic are Colombia, Bangladesh, and Russia...which means that a journalist is not speaking the truth about the thing he or she knows little, there he is talking about justice and social issues. The numbers are astronomical: 66 Filipino journalists slain since the 1986 restoration of democracy; 25 in the last three years; four killed from January to March 2005 alone, while there are cited assassination attempts.

Those for public entertainment from departments in the third media man in the newspaper who attacked by lawsuit guns, but he was blasted enough to survive. Police have already identified three possible reasons for the string of attacks: one, Inquirerinside's criticism of the local gaming lords; two, his political affiliation with the opposition; and three, his exposé of the alleged pardons by government of convicted policemen.

Various groups have criticized the Philippine government and its police for allowing the climate to go unchallenged and unpunished, as the slaying of Mindanao journalists Andrew Esperas, Edgar Damalerio and Edgar Amoro attest to only too well.

What has emboldened their killers? What has incited journalists into hot quests for hired guns? The answer lies in one unique overlap of democracy: core Godfathers type politics, a kind of Thomas-influenced mass democracy.

Free and frivolous...defenders of a free press unwisely blame the "culture of impunity" where criminals go scot-free; where, as usual, the killers are enabled by patronage in the police, the army, and where, at least, only the rich can fly are punished but outside the rich mass remain. For our police, it is a problem of professional competence: for our governance, a problem of political will. The new PNP director general has been sacked—he blurts for example, did chief "to open the way for an impartial investigation," as he earlier did with the police chief of General Santos City where investigation journalist Esperas was killed. Those responsible for governance have symbolic value sometimes, but they are a clear break from the seeming quality of the past.

More than that, however, what makes local journalists and whistleblowers every more vulnerable is large-scale institutional failure. Today, in scandal, no scam, no racket will be investigated by the police. And governments, or governance unless they are bombarded by unrelenting media attention. Without the formal rules have all so carefully adopted the democratic and governmental powers, whereas our laws possibly speak of the duty to punish and prosecute, the reality is that the power to convict more requires the will to exercise that power.

And for that our nation has united as the Fourth Estate. We require our journalists to provide the will power to begin the investigations and to stop the crime. More media personnel are targeted by killers for hire because the mass media are effectively the lenses and megaphone of the entire law and order system.

With common media pressure, the law enforcers and prosecutors can sleep their sleep. Act and tell the killers' names. Sorry, buddy, I have no choice. Those multithreading screens are breathing down my neck. Probably long-ish (and the names of corpse would underwrite) for no one has himself would say, "It's just business, it's not personal." Yes, distance has sometimes one by, and gone hunts authorities, and effectively close the case in the archives.

Also I comment democracy has no republic, only democracy, and we will rely on popular pressure to make those institutions work. The deaths of the crusading men and women of the press demonstrate that one true pull of politicians are and order.

Third, the recent killings also indicate another trend. Almost all of the latest victims were local media practitioners. Democracy creates power to the people, and it gets diverse to the people in local communities and their local papers and radio stations. Localized democracy relies even more on local journalists to expose the grassroots scams and abuses, as all these police function of the Superintendents showing misbehavior...and it is in this level where these journalists are most exposed and distinguished. They should give pause to advocates of devolving more and more power to smaller and smaller units of governance, because therein lie the most pervasive of brutal power relationships in all its most personal and most raw. There we face the lingering Medusa in all of us.

Comments to raul@ljpdf.com.ph

A recipe of proven failures

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE MANIFESTO [illegible] by retired Gen. Jose Almonte that is Gloc Filipino has Saturday calling for the formation of a "revolutionary alliance" government, outlines the blueprint of a fusion military dictatorship more dominant than Ferdinand Marcos' authoritarianism.

The blueprint reveals the word "technocracy" —already a bad word in Asia which has experimented a series of authoritarian regimes since the 1970s. In its stead, the blueprint uses the phrase "a proposal for unified transformative government." The blueprint is the model of the "national salvation" regime that was installed by the military-dominated ASEAN Direct Law and Order Repression Committee, the name of the "national salvation" regime that was tailor-fitted for more than a decade.

The timidness is transient with key words that —behind the latinized phrases— are: "national direction," "unified and wide-ranging reforms to mobilize and strengthen the nation's security," and launching a "program of national cohesion"—all euphemisms for the imposition of 100 of our people, and unify them in the hunch toward a progressive and prosperous national life." The manifesto's most glaring shortcoming is that it lacks a social program that seeks to distribute wealth from the top to the bottom in order to build up the base of the kind of leaders who will run the country during the transition. It fails short in describing the method of digesting the existing government, except with vague reference to "people power."

The manifesto's emphasis is on the institutionalizing graft and corruption as the root of the nation, all emphasis. There is nothing new in this rhetoric—the battle cry of traditional parties during elections. The manifesto's emphasis on "ethical leadership" is a throwback to the Marcos era when the dictator used the slogan "Bagong Lipunan" to describe his regime's moral basis.

Under the manifesto, the president is given overnight powers to "effect unchecked governance." Yet is not a figurehead to—just a convenient gesture. He is to be assisted by a Council of Ideas composed of one commander from each autonomous region." According to this blueprint, the council operates as a corporate body with the president as chair and the prime ministers as the chief executive officers. The result is "autonomous" the undemocratic leadership that rests in the hands of government of the nation and harmony of governance across a federated archipelago. Think two land masses of genetic immunity to the disease. In the medieval past, both have been pulled up the ravine of one so-called survivors in fact, nonbelievers, there has only been one discoverer, a couple of rabbits who are surviving, and that was with massive medical intervention in an American hospital.

We should have more than enough rabies clinics, especially with the summer break and kids roaming the streets, running higher risks of dog bites.

'Oh boy'

The reason I'm doing this column is that a few messages, I got to read on different occasions, have to do with fear of rabies in their perspectives of rabies. These perceptions can spell the difference between life and death, between our high rabies death rates and the almost zero rate in the United States.

Let me describe the incidents that gave rise to the discussions. I had an American visitor, whom I will call Wendy. A rabid [illegible] had bitten her dog several times. Wendy was always opening dogs and cats and puppies and kittens and wanting to adopt homeless ones in America.

During her visit, we dropped by an NGO office which, in Pinoy fashion, had a dog chained by the gate. Predictably, when Wendy saw the dog, she said, "Oh boy," and petted and cuddled, "What a nice dog" and extended her hand in friendship. In a split second, the dog lunged forward and sank its teeth into her hand.

I had Wendy wash her hands immediately with soap, but, gentle as was recommended. I then advised the NGO to observe the dog for the next 10 days and to keep an updated account of any change in the dog's behavior. I told them, should he exhibit unfriendliness.

Wendy had to return to the States and the events would not quickly happen; and whether on the 9th day after the bite, when Wendy's vaccination is taking, if [illegible] the NGO office, please make sure to find out what had happened to the dog. For e-mail was frantic because her doctor in the States had told her she was good to do so if the dog had rabies. I was embarrassed, too, having let the incident pass, and I rushed over to the NGO. You can imagine my anxiety as I approached the gate, when I saw the dog still there. When I asked one of the NGO staff if they had noticed anything, she deflapped her shoulder, "Oh boy," and then added quickly, her voice almost tinged with approval, "Ah, the dog seems more fierce now."

Rabid dog, good dog

There are years of experience with rabid dogs in the farms, once rabid, the rage there, chain them, running the gamut puppies into fractured neuroses, ready to snap at anything, anyone. I suspect many dog owners even had the perverse pleasure when their dog bites someone because they think that since the dog's rabid human blood, their hesitant even to have it destroyed. Unfortunately, the rabies virus in the human owners can't control it, much less bring it to the vet for their rabies shots.

Then, too, we still don't understand what rabies is. We think that a dog gets rabies after biting someone. Given that these people are all rabies victims, it is clear that it is not after the victim has received rabies—thanks to the garlic or other folk remedies. In reality, these unknown rabies in the bite place.

Let's get a clear view: a person gets rabies if bitten by a dog already infected with rabies. But a rabid dog may not necessarily show the [illegible] symptoms—thus, include convulsions, frothing at the mouth, and other "mad" behavior, appropriately in Tagalog we say "nasuka" (going insane) or tuliy to rabies.

If someone is bitten by a dog that is obviously rabid—if no one else is crazy and on a mad rampage—you should wash the bite wound with soap, then rush to the hospital or in Manila to the nearest to get the person vaccinated.

If the dog has no signs of rabies, it should be kept under observation for the next 10 days. If the dog has already been infected, the signs usually emerge within the period and the person who said bitten should start getting rabies shots. They may get the vaccine shots [illegible] the dog's rabies. And there are very expensive anti-rary some risks of side effects—needs to be noting if the dog wasn't infected in the first place.

You should also learn the victim vaccinated if the dog disappears or dies. Don't bother trying to determine the cause of death. It doesn't take chances here.

I don't believe in fear tactics, but I will repeat that there is no cure for rabies, and it is almost always fatal. Not only that, dying from rabies is a slow and terrible process. Don't take chances—have your dogs vaccinated and do think again about the way you raise your dogs. Dogs will guard your property, but they are happiest when they are with people. But if you chain and maltreat them, you could end up with killer dogs who just might turn against you and your family. Even if there's no rabies involved, a dog's attack and bites can be painful and traumatizing, especially for children. If you have a dog that is [illegible] mean, you should not wait for time for change—dogs are amazingly malleable and will respond quickly to loving care.

Dog walk

Still on animal welfare, the Philippine Canine Club Inc. (PCCI), the biggest kennel club in the country, regularly stages groups in organizing a Dog Walk on Sunday, May 8. To spread the nourishing comfort out, the event will start in 4 a.m. at different assembly points.—PAWS will start at the Malate Church parking lot. The walk will be around the PCCI area. The site is a kind of Star Island for dogs, taming picnic amenities and [illegible] the event also to break a Guinness world record for dog walking.

You need to register the dogs beforehand—they have to be vaccinated against rabies since before April 30, 2005, and only one dog is allowed per dog owner or dog walker. You can file the dog's name, owner's name and address to: PAWS at 475 Unit 704, 1008, labeled "Dog Walk," with your names details. They will then issue you an [illegible] registration. You can also call 817-5555/891-3966) or 0 (0405 (PCCI) for more information.

If your dog isn't eligible [illegible] status, you hope to have her vaccinated, right?), you might want to show up anyway for the dog and cheer their dogmothers. The event should end around 8:30 a.m. or 9 a.m.

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Rabies alert

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

WE have one of the highest death rates in the world for rabies, a disease we fear. Rabies death stories are part of our folklore—I grew up with stories about Aetnadio-Boy, the victim dying of rabies. Despite these fears, the majority of our dogs are not vaccinated against rabies, posing a grave threat to public health.

The reason for this neglect is that while we fear rabies, we

New and old ways of loving

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

[illegible] homosexuals hope to demonstrate the gay community's wide choice both, but with TV shows like "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" and its counterpart, "Queer Eye for the Straight Girl," and its ilk, [illegible] other offerings in the genre, these dangerous, after all, could give the [illegible] week after week they're shown mainstreaming a hopelessly broken counterpart, unhappiness, and [illegible] of the gay lifestyle, [illegible] straight guy into a half-way responsible [illegible] dweller.

There's nothing like watching "Queer Eye" for the straight guy—and experiencing one time of the more self-centered [illegible] to open up his bedroom and outlook on the stereotypes about gay men, in a true, after all, that gay men have been [illegible] more style and steadfast social stigma than [illegible] there is no question that the show [illegible] proves that they aren't all sexual predators (even if Carson Kressley does push the envelope at times), and could often be outright protective of their straight friends. But the show's premise of each episode [illegible] is difficult to believe, for instance, that homosexuality presents a threat to the "stability of the family," when the host [illegible] gay men [illegible] straight men to look better, to have [illegible] and to better dress their women [illegible] girlfriends. More than once, an episode of "Queer Eye" has ended with a marriage proposal, [illegible] host helps the [illegible] impressing the loving couple with vows in their eyes.

And it's not just in the Fab Five. Elsewhere in reality TV land, gays are showing up straights in the humanity department.

• • •

IN THE CURRENT season of "The Amazing Race," which draws to a close next week, the [illegible] pairs of two men and two women [illegible] teamed, but they're already shown that they've got bigger hearts than any of the couples currently leading the race. When brothers Brian and Greg [illegible] into an accident during a stint [illegible] Africa, in which their concentration was noticeably [illegible], only Brian and Lynn stopped and went down their vehicle, even if it accelerated their [illegible] [illegible] at first to the [illegible].

All the other couples continued to drive [illegible] from the accident scene, though some showed [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Pathetic cure for doctors' exodus

LETTERS

[redacted] if I have been out of the Philippine medical loop for a while, I still keep myself abreast with what is happening in the medical community in the Philippines through consistent communication with my former colleagues there. I was in the country last February for a month's vacation, and from what I gathered from them, private medical practice is declining very slightly, with more for those in government service.

I believe that the "I propose to keep Filipino doctors from going abroad" (PDI, 4/30/05) are very pathetic proposals which will not keep the young ones from leaving. Doctors do not see a greener future in the medical practice there; income is just one of the many issues contributing medical practice in government hospitals or the whole government health care system itself.

Give government doctors the compensation that executives in government corporations (who do nothing but shake the government arm deeper into the fiscal quagmire) are getting, and they will stay for a few years. Give them a good working environment, and they will stay a few years more. Give them the technology and the other tools to make their practice their profession well and so give their patients more hope, and they will stay and never leave.

The problem of Filipino doctors leaving the Philippines has evolved into a complex issue that involves not just money. Fixing something is done about this, we will see no light at the end of the tunnel.

—ROGELIO PAUL
<redacted>

Dog-eating, ultimate betrayal of a friend

THIS is in response to the March 17, article in the inquirer regarding dog eating and stray dog control.

I agree with Liz Trinidad-Tuason's assertion that Malacañang and Malaya[illegible] are need to require owners to register their dogs. The veterinary animal control measure has been successfully implemented by Manila's City's Animal Control and Protection (CAP) for [illegible]. There are already close to 30,000 registered dogs in this city alone. When dogs are registered, they are given rabies vaccination (if they don't have yet), and the owners pay no annual fee of P75. Apco also strictly penalizes those who inhumanely refuse to obey the law on pet dogs. As a result, the total registry are considered still low [illegible].

I am, however, disappointed by Senator's declaration as a dog eater. This would be good only if he is saying it out of guilt and is genuinely not in possession of the dog-eating practice again; otherwise, she will only serve to [illegible] dog meat cookers.

When I first visited the United States, the only first question I was asked was "Do Filipinos really eat dogs?" In one episode of "Friends," a popular TV sitcom, Friends, who was boarding the [illegible] assessment kiosk, uttered something like "we will now take a few minutes' break—enough time for you to get some snacks, and for Filipinos to cook their dogs." That particular episode generated a lot of angry reactions from the Filipino community, including some Philippine officials.

So excuse, [illegible] that is to be labeled a "dog eater," that is, except maybe the likes of Saturn and Jaime Bautista Soriano. The latter once said that he is willing to go to jail for eating dogs—this was when Republic Act 8485 (Animal Welfare Act) was first passed. Here is a government official openly defying a national law. Isn't this setting the Philippine government for us to seriously enforce the Animal Welfare Act and cause Damiyo's request.

—OSCAR LEE,
<redacted>

Not party to misconduct

THIS [illegible] to a news item published in the April 9 issue of the Inquirer, implicating me and others in [illegible] in alleged misconduct. ("Top Navy officials [illegible] corruption probe")

What I clarify that transactions made before June 8, 2004, she don't amounted as acting commander of the Philippine fleet, were beyond my knowledge and accountability. It is [illegible] for me to have consolidated all those support funds of the Philippine fleet from the second to the fourth quarter of 2004. In fact, I was able to satisfy almost all of the requirements of the [illegible] conducted despite the meager remaining budget for that year's [illegible].

I did not withhold or withdraw any transaction of [illegible] Russell, AFP III commission of the previous commander posted [illegible]. Also, there were never any phone deliveries that happened during my [illegible] as acting commander of the Philippine fleet.

On the charges I made with regard to my audit, she is for said that officers normally follow a particular route for career advancement.

I hope that details my name which I have [illegible] kept unsullied during my entire military career.

—RAMILENGUIN
TIAMZON (AFP (ret.))

THE ARTICLE was based on a misquotation on an interview with the spokesman of the Philippine Navy. As far as I know, the investigation is still going on.

—DONALD PATTERSON

Healthy labor-management ties

[redacted] the duly recognized organization representing employees in the formulation of labor and social policy issues, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) wishes to clarify that the employers have not prejudged the issue of wage adjustments, that are the subject of public hearings at the regional wage boards.

In sum presumptuous for the "screamed official of a major business association" to claim that employers are willing to grant [illegible] increase of P28 to P32." (PDI, 5/3/05) We ask the public to be cautious about any attempts to politicize these discussions and manipulate the process just to raise false hopes among our workers.

We are sympathetic with the workers' request for higher wages. Consequently, our participation in the public hearings is the wage boards will aim to strike a balance between the demand of the workers for relief from the rising cost of living and the need to preserve jobs.

My biggest issue here that should be considered in discussion by the wage boards is that productivity and wage adjustments should go hand in hand. It is counterproductive to the market that will enable companies to provide more for their workers.

Another important consideration is the impact of wage adjustments particularly on the viability of small and medium enterprises. We are a nation of SMEs, the main generators of jobs and income. Almost 90 percent of the more than 800,000 business establishments are labor-intensive "micro," small and medium enterprises.

We take note that the President, despite the financial crisis caused by our huge budget deficit, has come up with a Labor Day package that truly reflects her concern for all Filipino workers. From our perspective, employers through the ECOP will continue to seek a constructive and productive partnership with organized labor and our OFWs in order to move this country forward.

—MIGUEL R. PADILLA, chair, ECOP
T. SORIANO, president,
Employers Confederation
of the Philippines,
[illegible]

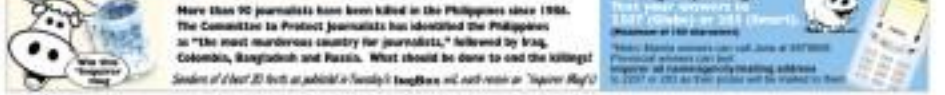
'Ruhayyat' one last, brief comment

THANK you for devoting precious space to our work in more today [illegible]. Please permit me one last brief comment, as one who is still [illegible] more of possible rights from adverse parties.

If columnist Conrado de Quiros could not appreciate the need for limits of judicial power in a constitutional system, as we exist for the rule of law, I hope he should at least recognize when factual allegations are made without basis. I cannot him there's no need to be personal, says a word only. He later made one too, which is, ignored by a quotation from "Rubayyat."

Others might have contrary views. I need not lecture again on election law or even on "compromise law" as I did years ago. As for De Quiros's columns, more fulfilling and might only be many, manners produced.

—LEONARDO A. QUISUMBING,
associate justice,
Supreme Court, Manila



[illegible] Across the NATION [illegible]
Assistant Editor Tony Gerguera

Solon seeks to postpone ARMM polls

COTABATO CITY—While everybody appears to be upbeat on the 56th regional elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, a Mindanao congressman has filed a bill in the House seeking a postponement of the elections.

Holding the political exercise would interrupt the "relative peace" the region is currently enjoying, according to Rep. Simeon Amin Datumanong, author.

Wednesday, Amin filed House Bill No. 6243 and House Resolution No. 776 in a bid to stop the holding of the ARMM elections scheduled on Aug. 8 this year.

If approved, it would be the second time that the scheduled elections in the region would be canceled, forcing [illegible] to select a governor, a vice governor and 24 members of the regional legislative body.

The bill gives President Macapagal-Arroyo the authority to name officers in charge upon the expiration of the terms of office of the incumbent officials.

Gov. Hussin Dasaan and other ARMM elected officials will step down from office on Sept. 30.

Political parties have selected their candidates, [illegible] have filed their certificates of candidacy and the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is prepared.

The deadline for filing of certificates was moved from April 16 to May 9.

According to Amin, holding elections this year will not only disturb the "prevailing peace" in the ARMM, but "will also affect the efforts of the national government, in implementing more economic development programs."

In September last year, a law was passed resetting the Nov. 26 balloting to Aug. 8 this year. In a statement, Amin said the silence of the deputies on her choice as Lakas-standard bearer for the gubernatorial post prompted him to file the bill.

He said the ruling political party cannot afford to be [illegible] amid as a result of the President's non-endorsement of her candidacy.

Ms Arroyo formed a selection committee that would choose from among Lakas aspirants who would be the party's standard-bearer. The list has been submitted to Malacañang but sources close to the party claimed the President might declare the election a "free zone" for party members.

The committee, headed by Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Deles, named Major Zaldy Ampatuan as its first choice.

The League of Municipalities of the Philippines in the ARMM sided with Amin's view saying the Presidents should not ignore the request from her call for national unity. Edwin O. Fernandez and Noah B. Abubakar, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

4 killed in gun duel

SAN CARLOS CITY—Four people were killed and six [illegible] when quarreling neighbors of a family exchanged gunfire during a wake for a dead relative in Barangay Cabitoonan here. Police said Modesto Mendoza, 47, was playing card games when a cousin, Ernesto Mendoza, allegedly shot and killed him with a cal. .22 [illegible]. Then he [illegible], William, who was at the wake, retaliated by shooting Ernesto. The wounded [illegible] Mendoza, Aldrog Rodrigo Mendoza, 50, and his daughter Lea, 29, both [illegible]. Manuel's wife, Erlinda, 48, was also shot and wounded and is now in serious condition at a hospital here. Rogelio Clemente, 36, of Malabuyoc town, reacted by getting hold of cousin Clemente's carbine, which he used to shoot the fleeing William. Police arrested Clemente.

Eric Mendoza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

University pact

TUGUEGARAO CITY—The Agro-Industrial in South Korea signed a memorandum of understanding with St. Paul University here for a student, faculty and personnel exchange program. The agreement intends to encourage the exchange of faculty, research and administrative personnel for lectures and consultations.

Catherine Cudal, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

15 sabbed for 'jueteng'

TUPI, Artop.—After failing to get police support, Vice Mayor Ruth Corral sought the help of the Army to [illegible] "jueteng" in this town. 6th Ranger [illegible] and a 16-man team of the Army's Scout Rangers from the 4th Scout Ranger Co. raided a jueteng collection in Purok 5, Barangay Tigbe here. An group arrested 15 persons inside the safehouse allegedly owned by a certain Thelma Mercader. Seized from the safehouse were jueteng paraphernalia and P6,731 in cash in various denominations. Judge Samuel Rotinio, presiding judge of the Tupi-Malapao Municipal Circuit Trial Court, issued the warrant of arrest against Magada, [illegible] and others. Corral disclosed that the [illegible] operation in the town had [illegible] over P2 million a month from [illegible].

Jail S. Sabo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Sleeping kits distributed

CITY OF [illegible]—The Sleeping Children of the Rim to Canada Chapter and the Kiwanis International [illegible] on April 27-29 more than 1,000 sleeping kits to [illegible] P1.4 million to poor children in Oriental Mindoro. Each kit cost P1,350 and consisted of everyday paraphernalia and sleeping items like blanket, mosquito net, pillow, school bag, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, slippers and sleeping clothes. Playground equipment like canvas hammock and slides will be turned over to the daycare center in Sitio Kalo-Kalo, Barangay Dao based here, according to Calapan Kiwanis Club president Nestor Fabulario.

Rhodora F. Mraila, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

New Legazpi market

LEGAZPI CITY—This city's new public market will be inaugurated on Thursday and will open to the public on the first week of May. The new [illegible] was constructed with a P110-million loan from the Philippine National Bank, according to Mayor Noel Rosal. It has three floors, with the ground floor for perishable goods, [illegible] and general merchandise, cereals, and food stalls. The second floor houses fish and marine products, meat and meat preparations, and fruits and vegetables. On the roof deck, [illegible] vendors are allocated 257 stalls. The market, located at Circumferential Road, Legazpi City, has a total land area of 1,891 sqm. and owned by the City of Legazpi.

Ma. Reynalyn Alcaraz, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Overcoming anger

EVERYONE loses the [illegible] occasionally to anger—ours is no less than pretty [illegible]. How can one change the anger within and [illegible] in more positive ways? [illegible] will discuss the underlying causes of anger, its effects on one's well-being and using one's energy in a more productive way, will be held at 9 a.m. May 7 until 5 p.m. May 8 at the [illegible] Kasiyahan Center for Spiritual Leadership located at 3330 Magallanes Drive, Tagaytay City. For details, call [illegible] (0918) 413-2188.

Bayan Muna decries tag of CPP 'front'

By Joey A. Gallardo
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—A top official of Bayan Muna in Eastern Visayas is appealing to Malacañang and the Department of the Interior and Local Government to stop labeling their group as a front of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

Villamor Mayor Romeo la Torre, Bayan Muna secretary-general of Samar, said the tag was "too cruel" and "without any basis," considering that Bayan Muna "is a legitimate political organization complying with our legal system."

"Bayan Muna is not, in any way, connected with the CPP-NPA. It is a registered and accredited political party," he told the business.

La Torre was said mayor of Villamor, about 50 km from Tacloban, under the Bayan Muna political party during the 2004 elections.

Palparan earlier accused Bayan Muna and other militant groups of being "fronts" of the CPP-NPA. He said he vowed to bring these groups among the country's political organizations.

La Torre said that if Palparan had any evidence linking Bayan Muna to the communist group, he should present this before people's bodies like national human rights watchdogs.

He said he would not object if Palparan would do this in public hearings and they debate to determine how to dispel misconceptions that the group were a "front" of the communist group.

"I will welcome it," he said. Villamor is just 40 km from Camp Navarro, the headquarters of the 8th ID, in Catbalogan, Samar.

La Torre said the business that the arrest of all who are Bayan Muna members were "a cause of alarm."

"We are all living within the democratic framework. If there is evidence, then let all persons on the list/s I militant considered and ask them if they have any involvement with the communist group and not resort to this brutal and barbaric way," he said.

"I must admit that I was worried for my safety. There is why I could not but go anywhere this week as a town mayor is now afflicted [because] I don't like what happened to some of my colleagues might also happen to me," La Torre said.

At least three Bayan Muna members in Eastern Visayas were killed or wounded by unidentified men.

Last March 14, two unidentified men in a motorcycle shot Pedrito Dacut, Bayan Muna coordinator in Eastern Visayas, while he was in a shop along Real Street in Tacloban.

Last April 17, Bayan Muna member Alfredo Dorio, 45, was gunned down by two unidentified men in Barangay San Vicente, Mahaplag, Leyte. His wife Imelda, a member of Gabriela, was wounded.

Motorcycle-riding men also shot and wounded Aldrin Antiado, Bayan Muna coordinator in Borongan, Samar, on April 9 in Barangay Amantacop.

Cop kills fellow cop over 'mahjong'

By Felipe V. Cabral
PDI Visayas Bureau

BORACAY—A policeman shot dead his fellow cop following a heated argument on Monday afternoon during a mahjong session in Kabulihan, Barangay Yapak, Capiz.

SPO2 Rizon Delgado, of the Capiz police station, died after two bullets pierced his left artery, intestines and lungs.

His assailant, SPO4 Alfonso Jimeno, assistant chief of the Traffic Management Group in Capiz, suffered bullet wounds in the hand, thigh and hip.

Police in Roxas filed murder charges against Jimeno, who was confined at the Capiz Emergency Hospital here.

Police said Jimeno and Delgado, who were both off duty, were playing mahjong in the house of a Mrs. Gamoso in Kabulihan here when a heated argument ensued between the two.

SPO2 Oscar Diasen of the Pontevedra police said Jimeno told Delgado to stop cheating in counting how the latter was supposed to win the game.

Delgado apparently took offense at Jimeno's remark and retorted that he was not cheating. Jimeno then stood, took out his .45-cal. pistol and shot Delgado.

Although he was hit, Delgado managed to fire his .38-cal. pistol at Jimeno.

The exchange of fire prompted the people inside Gamoso's house to scamper for safety.

Delgado, a resident of Barangay Lawa-an-I, was declared by the Capiz Emergency Hospital to have died at 10 p.m. (See Cop, page A19)

MUSCLE MEN
Competitors test their strength in an arm wrestling contest held in celebration of Baguio's 46th Independence Foundation.

Group assails DENR release of 'ipil' lumber

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Palawan's Environmental Task Force has appealed the decision of an environmental regional director releasing a truck and 60 pieces of ipil lumber that the task force had seized earlier.

The Palawan Eagle Enforcement (EEE), the special environmental monitoring team of the province, protested the order of Legaspi-area of Environment and Natural Resources (CE) regional director Bobby Fiamora, arguing that the order did not consider the questionable documents presented by the alleged owner of the freshly cut ipil lumber.

Total log ban

Palawan has imposed a total log ban.

Issued on the appeal, the EEE and the DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) and the Criminal Detection and Investigation Group apprehended on basis, a truck containing 60 pieces (1,324 bd ft) of still and freshly cut ipil, in a 6X6 checkpoint at about 5 a.m. last Jan. 30.

When the truck passengers were asked about the documents, a certain Oliver Lalicon, who represented the owner, orally showed a certification from the Cenro of Roxas town that the lumber pieces were taken from a diseased mastwood. But beneath the old lumber were freshly cut ipil lumber. The volume of the lumber also did not tally with that indicated in the documents.

It has been a known fact in Palawan that some illegal loggers used this modus operandi to show that the transport of lumber is legal.

Surprise, surprise

But during the administrative hearing on Feb. 1, complainant EEE was surprised to know that the alleged owner, a certain engineer Wilfredo Tenorio, presented a certification from a farmers' cooperative that the freshly cut ipil pieces were from a community-based forest management (CBFM) project.

On this ground, Fiamora held that the shipment was properly covered by transport documents and therefore was illegal.

But EEE maintained that there was an anomaly in the shipment because videos they secured from the cooperative that allegedly issued the CBFM certification, its officers denied they gave away any log because all were dry that don't have an environmental compliance certificate from the DENR. —Joyleta F. Duarte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Ilocos cop chief welcomes probe of radioman's shooting

SENIOR Supt. Mario Solisgan, outgoing provincial commander of Ilocos Sur, has welcomed the announced plan of the Philippine National Police to investigate the ambush of Nestor Sequintimala, a defiant candidate in the last provincial elections.

"I am confident an impartial investigation will clear me of any involvement in the case," Solisgan said in a press statement as he decried efforts to link him to the ambush.

Sequintimala, who started as a radio "blocktimer" after he was defeated in his bid for a seat in the provincial board in the last elections, was shot and wounded by unidentified men in front of his house in Santa Ilocos Sur, at around 9:30 p.m. on April 29.

Solisgan said Sequintimala has "many enemies."

"Before the last elections, Sequintimala was charged with stealing 30-year-old Mary Lang, of Vigan town and the case, docketed as Criminal Case No. 13052, is awaiting resolution," Solisgan said.

"I welcome an impartial investigation of the case. Sequintimala himself knows he has made many enemies... I'm also sure he knows I'm not the one behind his ambush," Solisgan said.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao was quoted as saying police were looking at three possible motives...Sequintimala's criticism of "jueteng," politics and the alleged low price of a piece of real estate bought by the Santa municipal government.

Baguio officials ask for help on dump fire

BAGUIO CITY—City officials have gone to the administrators of the Benitez dump in Quezon City for advice on how to quell a methane-induced fire that has been eating the bottom of Baguio's only dump for eight weeks now.

But they are now debating the logic of the Payatas solution.

City experts have been pushing the city council to allocate P1.2 million to buy tons of earth and water to stop the fire.

Payatas experts, however, told Baguio officials last month to simply cover the dump with a thin layer of soil to block all external air passages through the mountain of garbage. In Cebu the fire, said Romeo Gerale, chief of the city's general services office.

Gerale helped establish a solid waste management system for the city when he supervised garbage disposal and the 3.5-hectare landfill.

He said covering the surface of the dump with thin soil layer helped quell a fire that erupted in 2003. "It's really simple. Take away the oxygen and the fire will consume itself," he said.

Digging the landfill up, and filling it with water, will only endanger the dump because water will destroy underground soil support, causing the massive garbage pile to collapse, he said.

Rhoda De Buenaventura, an environmentalist of the Ateneo de Davao University (ADDU), said the city government sent four teams of a technical working group to solicit solutions to the fire and to compare notes on a viable solid waste management formula for the city dump.

But experts in Payatas could only provide generic solutions, she said. Experts continue to debate the value of their suggestions, she said, because experts from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have also offered a different opinion.

However, once these debates end, Buenaventura said authorities must begin to respond to the people of the dump.

She said air quality tests seem to suggest that the toxic smog arising from the methane fire has drifted in portions of downtown Baguio in certain hours of the day.

People in Barangay Irisan, where the dump is located, have been complaining of long all-nights due apparently to the fire, she said.

Buenaventura said the ADDU has begun dialogues with the dump residents, many of whom eke their living as waste pickers.

"They have been told in no way away from the dump because the [two-month long] fire may have rendered the whole Level unstable. We don't want accidents...," she said. Hanover Cadwana, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Cavite gov sacks 3 jail guards after jailbreaks

A SERIES of jailbreaks at the Cavite Provincial Jailhas prompted Gov. Ayong Maliksi to order the relief of three provincial jail officials following an investigation by a committee.

On April 27, inmate Mario Sotto, alias Mustapa 18, of Barangay Dan Bantad, Dasmariñas, Cavite, who was arrested for frustrated murder last Aug. 6, bribed the jail by allegedly paying a large amount of money to the guards. Prior to this, three jailbreaks involving other prisoners occurred.

Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, provincial police chief, expressed alarm at the three serial jailbreaks.

In February, Rosales filed administrative and criminal cases against provincial Jail Warden Conrado Ekkilanan, his assistant, Severino Lobigan, and jail guard Cirso Mendoza. After the last jailbreak, Rosales requested Maliksi to suspend the three jail officials.

Acting upon the resolution created by the committee, Maliksi immediately ordered Mahabunan, Lobigan and Mendoza to relinquish their posts as part of steps to restructure the provincial jail.

Lawyer Leilani Bacuang-Cabacungan, chief of the provincial legal office and a member of the committee, said, "Based on our investigation, it has already been the practice of provincial jail authorities to allow inmates to go out for visited personal and political reasons..."

"The role of jail guards is to ensure is not sufficient for the effective implementation of criminal law in the province," she said. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Far Eastern spikers enter second round

By Irvin A. Gonzales

ROSARIO—Host unbeaten as contenders.

This was the sudden transformation Far Eastern University underwent in one year as it crushed the opposition at the start of the ninth Sweden Beach Volley yesterday in this inland paradise.

FEU's Rolet Marabe and Jose Lopez, who finished 12th and last during the 2004 Boracay competition, affirmed their new billing as contenders favorites, going 2-0 and sweeping themselves of a slot in the next round.

"Hopefully, this will go to the end," said Lopez, a tanned 19-year-old junior and Recreation Management student. "We still need to play well in the next round."

The FEU pair cleaned roundtable their in bracing University of Mindanao-Davao tigers, 21-15, in the morning and men's defending champion Universidad of San Jose-Recoletos, 21-15, in the afternoon.

The identical wins scored before a big summer crowd that braved the intense summer heat installed Marabe and Lopez, both tall and lean, as super contenders this year.

Vaunted game

The USJR tandem of Joseph Alegado and Antony "Bit" Bandoja failed to get its vaunted game going against the FEU lean. Then trailed, 9-6, and only threatened at 13-14, FEU went seven of the next nine points to sweep up the match.

USJR fell to an even 1-1 record, counting its 21-15 win over UM-T earlier in the day that still not lost for the team, which only needs to perform well today to advance to the next round.

This year's sponsors are Speedo, Milkies, Cebu Pacific, five Jacks Resorts, La Salle Greenhills, Villa de Oro, Coppertone, Sunway Regency, Subic Palm Hill, National Sports Café and ClickTheCity.com.

After yesterday's round-robin affairs, the top four teams will draw a bye with the losers right dispatching the four other duos for the next round. The quarterfinals will be played this afternoon, the semis tomorrow morning and the finals in the afternoon.

Admission also went 2-0 after a 21-15 win over Arenas de Bonso and a 21-19 squeaker over University of Southeastern Philippines. Others in strong contention for the men's crown and the P100,000 cop prize are Ateneo de Davao (3-1), University of San Carlos (2-1), University of Southeastern Philippines (2-1) and St Benilde (1-0), another one of the favorites.

On the women's side, Southeastern (1-1) remained on track toward a third straight crown while University of Mindanao-Tagum, USJR and the University of Visayas continued to lack behind. UMBT-2 is the only women's team at 2-0 as of presstime.

The spikers from Tagum, Liezl Mainland and Rhyza Ojot, crushed Philippine Christian U Manila, 21-13, before sweeping past Foundation U, 21-19.

At 1-0 and forward to win their next matches were Southeastern's, a 21-14 winner over Ruby Team of Davao; USJR, a 21-5 winner over Mindanao State U; and PCU a 21-14 winner over University of Mindanao.

Aside from the P100,000 top prize for the men's and women's champion, P50,000 worth of sports equipment will also go to the schools they represent.

DIVING Cayuga the play also for Far Eastern against University of Mindanao-Davao

GRAN MATADOR

Demape powers Realtors over Express

REVIVED

JAMES TORT (Antonio Edwards)
4:46 a.m.—Sun before first
7:58 a.m.—Sun before time runs

By Jun Mendoza

MUNTINLUPA CITY—Gilbert Demape counted a three-pointer, stole a crucial Bonbon possession and sealed a pro-per last pass to a gliding Kenneth Duremdes.

It all happened in the final two minutes, giving Win Uncle Bradley a 84-81 victory over the Express in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Filoteo Center last night.

Duremdes' layup forced Alaska, 81-76, in the second game to snap the Aces' seven game winning streak.

The Realtors, who drew 16 points and 22 rebounds from Chris Bergens, improved their win-loss card to 6-4 and gained a share of the lead with the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals. The Aces fell to sixth record at 8-3.

From a slim, 67-64, edge, the Realtors suddenly built a 91-84 bubble following Demape's trey and assist to Duremdes.

Ryan Fletcher roared in 28 points and pulled down 17 rebounds, Dennis Espino had 24 and 19 while Bonbon came out of a slump by living 23 points, grabbing seven boards and dishing out six assists.

Winning five of their last six games, the Realtors now moved to solo fifth at 6-4 while sending the Express to their seventh defeat in 12 outings.

Chester Tolentino and Delbert Obinan successfully got the outfits on Ronnie Ilarde, who erupted for 36 points, including nine triples, against Red Bull last week.

"Everybody's talking about Ronnie as we drew up a play to swap him or at least limit him to 12 points," said Sta. Lucia head coach Koy Banal.

Ilarde failed them as the league's premier offensive fuelshed only 14 points on six of 15 shooting.

Jerejetic, however, clubbed all of his three attempts from three-point range.

The scores:

STA. LUCIA 84—Fletcher 28, Espino 24, Bonbon 20, Obinan 10, Bergens 8, Tolentino 2, Gonzales 2, Ianong 0, Agustin 0, Mendoza 0.

EXPRESS 81—Miller 27, Alfaro 14, Lanzano 6, Ilarde 14, Jarin 2, Arnaiz 6, de Ocampo 4, Pennisi 0, Castillano 4, Pospos 2.

Quarters: 17-14, 44-42, 71-66, 84-81.

SPORTSWATCH

Earlier BEST classes at Ateneo

BELOOKOUT Dentist official Marilyn Jorge announced yesterday that the entry-level and intermediate courses at Ateneo de Manila University's summer courses this afternoon have been moved to an earlier time. For 11 a.m. "The courses are not available because they clash with our classes in school activity," Jorge explained. Who BEST is assuming in other venues with no tentative scheduled. Jorge added.

Palawan holds Baragatan chess

BEST DEBUT Chess Federation of the Philippines vice president and Palawan provincial administrator Atty. Florino Tarrabilos announced the staging of the 2005 Palawan Baragatan chess tournament from June 6 to 7 at the Provincial Capitol building in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. The event is open to all chess players. For details, call Puerto Princesa City Chess Association president Bel Rosario-Tarrabilos at 0921-5289019. **M. Mercadejas**

Bigtime 4-cocker today at PCC

QUALITY Fights can be expected in today's bigtime 4-cock derby at the Pasay City Cockpit. The derby is sponsored by Sagupaan Complexon 2000. Sagupaan 8-42 Fortes and Sagupaan Mike from Ilocano by the Rule of Law group. It makes a cash prize of P300,000. Among the entries are members of Mahogani Fighters Club, Pinas Cockpit Cockers Association, Cockhouse Cockers Association of the Philippines, and National Cockers Association.

Derby stakes P1 million, Big Horn

A CONSIDERABLE prize of P1 million and an imported horse Big Horn test are at stake in today's championship round of "Carrier Ka Sa Ba 5-Cock Derby" at Philippine Blood Cockpit. With more than 100 fights lined up, the event is all set at 10 a.m. Thirty-three participants are set to field five cocks each. Among the two pointers are Mayor Principal Polintan, former UGAP president Raymond Relano, Eddie Kapper and Rep. Ronnie Dunn.

Race 1—1. Johart 2. Shaker 3. Blonde 4. Sweetheart's Lady
Race 2—1. Chariot 2. Ace 3. Hashtagger 4. Ana's Dream
Race 3—1. Sweet Talk 2. Barbie Bullet 3. Bridegroom 4. Oakland Jan
Race 4—1. Candid 2. Model Principal 3. Diamond Digger 4. Freddy
Race 5—1. Count Dracula 2. Pongo 3.
Race 6—1. Lambingan 2. Shock and Awe 3. Eagle Only 4. Supersonic
Race 7—1. Ring 2. Mighty Kahuna 3. Blackwing 4. Flaming Cold 5. Lucky Strike
Race 8—1. Warrior Pt. 2. Silver Eagle 3. Dixie Rocket 4. Jet Ball 5. Bedford Lady 6. Smart Kelvin
Race 9—1. Power 2. Snow Mystery
Race 10—1. Eagle Fire 2. Tanding 3. Commotion 4. Commander 5. Quiet Storm

RP Youth team finds a godmother in Ms Lina

LINA

MAYA Lina, the amiable wife of governor Ben Lina, is basketball's newest benefactor.

Ms Lina has believed her willing man to support the national youth team, much like the way Ben Lina did prior to his appointment as commissioner of the Bureau of Customs.

"I can assure them willing to assist, what my husband did for basketball, especially for our youth players, who cared our whole hearted support because they are the future of basketball in the country," said Lina, now advised adopted as the sport's godmother.

For starters, Lina said she is making her eyes on the products of the coming Air Force Basketball League, a basketball affair headlined by the all-the top 20 players from the wedding meet nationwide, will be taken care of—from their training and education to their exposure to international tournaments.

The unique tournament was conceptualized two years ago by the national youth team's godfather Ben Lina, who reasoned out that cash players limited to play like point guards will be the Philippines' greatest weapons in its quest to regain basketball supremacy in the Asian region.

"I would like to continue this concept of cooperation which we all know has reaped fruitful dividends for the past two years," said Ms Lina.

RNP executive vice president Christian Tan underscored the support of Ms Lina, saying the basketball body needs all the support that it can get. "Ms Lina's support to the youth team is something we in the RNP greatly appreciate," said Tan.

Air 21 president Lito Alvarez, who is also a member of The NPC executive board, echoed Tan's statements.

"It's for the country, Mr. and Ms. Ben Lina will always be ready to help," said Alvarez. "They have been involved in basketball for years, helping the development of the sport through the youth players, without asking for anything in return."

High-living coco firm ...

(Continued from A1)

boss, resigned chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, said the use of the coconut levy funds for Gokel's parties was questionable.

Nuc policy

"I don't even think it's a policy. There's not even a resolution from the [CIDF] board allowing it," said Fuster, who at an April 27 letter to United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) Gen. Asst. Pres. questioned the use of the coconut levy funds for the party and bemoaned the lax CIDF officials.

Even said the party could have started after the coconut industry was under the control of farmers from Eduardo "Bombit" Cojuangco during the Ida dictator Ferdinand Marcos regime. "I think it's here [a repeat since then]," she said.

She also said that the board of the party was quite arbitrary and decided only by a committee of three members, and that the making possible was a questionable.

Gokel himself broke a CIDF form that enable company expenses.

Ms. Arroyo initially named Gokel to the UCPB board of directors in 2001.

A group of CIDF employees had earlier said Gokel had continually disrupted the President's name "to [a party] involving influence."

The CIDF was recently reported as ready to decide on about P4 billion in coconut levy funds to finance a new coconut research facility and plantation to replace the low—a project questioned by top officials of the Philippine Coconut Authority.

P25,000 weekly for gas

In the radio interview, Gokel admitted receiving a Hacienda Hervel worth at least P2 million when he succeeded Ebdane as CIDF head.

He also admitted applying P25,000 weekly on gasoline for two vehicles, but said he needed to load up for trips to the provinces.

The CIDF employees had questioned the amount of Gokel's gasoline, saying he did not need that much "since he stayed at home most the company office in San Lorenzo Village, Makati.

Gokel likewise admitted meeting abroad eight times, with his wife and some friends, at CIDF expense. He said the trips were official and his attorney was to negotiate little issue with foreign firms on oil production, shipping and processing.

According to the CIDF employees, the company spent at least P2 million on the eight trips, and that the Gokel couple—he as chairman, and the coconut czar.

The employees also said the CIDF spent at least P4 million for Gokel's trips to the United States and Europe.

Gokel did not deny the trips, but said these were productive because he succeeded in negotiating lower shipping costs for the CIDF products, mainly coconut oil, he negotiated with other countries.

Golf club privileges

The group of CIDF employees said at least P868,000 in memorial Relief was spent on privileges for Gokel at the Black Thick Golf and Country Club.

Gokel acknowledged this, but said that he did not earn shares in the club and that the money was for "playing rights" only.

He said he needed to play golf and spend time at exclusive golf and country clubs because this was how he sometimes conducted official business and meetings with CIDF clients or partners.

He also admitted that he sold his golf membership shares, but denied that CIDF money had been used.

"It was charged to my pay," he said. "I can't understand the lay fuss about [the golf shares]. Why so much it is in the to-and-fro?"

The CIDF employees also said Gokel was behind the UCPB's failure to lower the interest rate on loans that the company had incurred—an interest projected to reach P100 million.

Gokel admitted this was true, but said it was not his fault and some result of the nature of the coconut industry.

"The industry is cyclical. Sometimes the price is acceptable, sometimes it is not acceptable," he said.

No luxuries

In Lawyer Ely Ann Cirilo, representative of the Quezon account farmers to the UCPB-General Insurance, said the business that the benefits for only his group had been receiving were far from luxurious.

Cirilo said he had been receiving P22,000 every two months—P16,000 in per diems and P6,000 as representation and transportation allowances.

He said he and his group had long sought a general meeting of all 23 farmers' representatives, but this was being thwarted by the like-minded with ... [illegible]."

"We want to find out the genuine status of the different companies funded by the coconut levy money, and to also set the coconut agenda to meet the interest of the millions of coconut farmers. But unfortunately, we don't have the members to propose our plans," Cirilo revealed in a phone interview.

He said the Galanguyo like had 16 representatives and his group, only 13.

House inquiry

Quezon Representative Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III and Pimentel Alcala said they would call for a House inquiry into the use of the P4 billion of CIF components funded by the multi-billion peso coconut levy fund.

Tañada said he was "completely upset" by Erin's disclosure on the perks of Gokel and company. He said the CIDF official had the license to "manage or oversee" the company's financial resources.

"The CIDF board of directors should be held accountable for their lavish lifestyles, considering that coconut farmers are among those who still continue to live in poverty," he said, adding:

"Are they really on a king for the purpose of the coconut farmers? Or they are too preoccupied in pursuing their own interests? It is obvious that they have not been acting in the best interest of the coconut farmers, which they are mandated to do. How are these people chosen and appointed to the position, in the first place?"

Meeting with Yorac

Alcala said all but Quezon legislators would also ask a meeting with Erin to make up how to effectively protect the interest of the coconut farmers," Alcala said. "[We] want to know if Atty. Bart Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Philip L. Tubeza in Manila

COA to present audit report to Senate

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE COMMISSION on Audit is set to present state reports on the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) to the Senate committees on agriculture and food.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. requested the COA to bring their reports on the audits now (turned from 1998 to 2002) to next week's hearings on the proposed federal coconut industry project to dispose del Sur, accordingly to Manuel Quiambao, a leader of the Rural Improvement Club and Coco-Levy Fund watchdog.

The hearing is holding hearings on the Agusan project following duties by resigned Philippine Coconut Authority administrator Reinerio Villaroza that a portion of the P4 billion awarded for the project would be diverted from the CIIF.

Quiambao, who attended the hearing on April 20, queried COA representatives on saying that the CIIF had been audited by the commission's Special Audit Office.

He said the state audit reports would be critical in exposing the excesses of CIIF officials and the lifted investments that could have been made by CIIF boards from the Angkas to the Bayada administration.

The private firm's MO made the CIIF miserable, but a separate report from the COA would "lend a certain level of credibility" to the findings on the CIIF's financial status, he said.

Quiambao said past administrations had been quiet on the mismanaging and failed investments of CIIF boards because the agency had also become "a milking cow" for the national government. "The problem is political still. There has been no regular audit because each administration has made it a milking cow from Cory [Aquino] to GMA [President Macapagal-Arroyo]."

He said it was during the term of ailed President Joseph Estrada [he] that the billions of farmers' money went. Eduardo "Bombit" Cojuangco, managed to get huge loans from the United Coconut Planters Bank, the administrators of the CIIF.

Quiambao urged the 30 farmer-representatives sitting on the boards of the CIIF and its subsidiaries to make a stand against the abuse of CIIF officials.

"They are blind to it because they don't see the whole picture," he said, adding that even the farmer-representatives were getting fat salaries and many perks.

The PCGG should also take decisive control over the CIIF now that the shares have been engraved," he said.

Palace tells Yorac: Thanks but no thanks

(Continued from A1)

the said presidential aide."

All of them are subject to audit... The information could be released at some time soon," he said.

Even had questioned the CIIF top officials' use of company funds for the purchase of latest cellphones, sports privileges and membership in golf clubs, among other perks. [See story on first page.]

The new PCGG chair, Camilo Sabio, yesterday told the Inquirer that Commissioner William Dichoso was "investigating the information given to [Even] by our client Nene."

When Dichoso, who heads the PCGG's Asset Management Department, completes his inquiry, he will present his findings to the commissioners at an en banc meeting, Sabio said in a brief phone interview.

"The commission could not have done should not continue. And we are doing something about that," Even's counsel on the Commission, Sabio added.

Even resigned last month to return to private law practice and attend to his health problems. But recently, she told the Inquirer that Malacañang had pressured her to quit because of her contrary position on the role of the governmental channel in Good and Sovereign Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Not a fighter

Victims of human rights violations during martial law are not too keen on Sabio's appointment as PCGG chair, but are willing to give him a chance.

Akbayan Rep. Loretta Anne Rosales told the Inquirer that other victims had "not expressed enthusiasm" over Sabio's appointment.

"The resignation of Hayden Even was unfortunate because she was very effective in her job," Rosales said. "I understand Chairman Sabio's been told to be impressed now, but we need someone with guts and integrity. I think before anyone [can be perceived as a fighter, not as independent-minded [as Even]."

But while she likes and hates "as much as [Sabio]," as Sabio, it is only fair to "give him a chance," Rosales said.

Mario Milo-Rodriguez of the human rights group Karapatan, said Sabio would have to live up to whatever Even had accomplished in the PCGG.

"I hope he's here better to the recovery of the Marcos wealth. Let's give him the benefit of the doubt," Rodriguez said.

But she pointed out that Even may had never been enacted over whatever was dropped PCGG chair.

"The track record of the PCGG in the recovery of the ill-gotten wealth is, on think, dismal," she said. "And the appointment of Sabio to the position of PCGG chair has no bearing on our opinion."

Hold again

Rodriguez called on Sabio to "give priority" to the 14,000 victims of human rights violations and not require them to go through a "validation process" prior to being compensated.

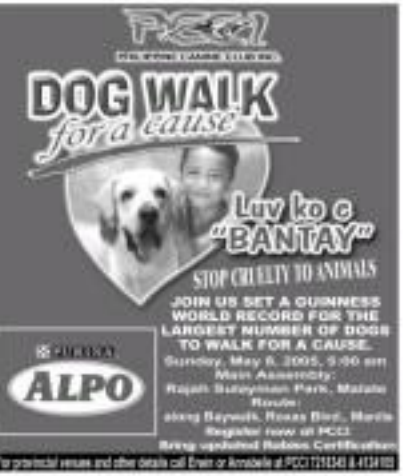
"We would like the new PCGG chair to support us and keep the plan for this validation process where we wouldn't have to re-submit our evidence all over again. We don't want to go through hell again," she said.

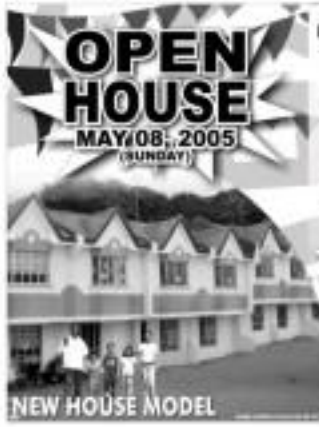
Rodriguez said Sabio should support the victims' move to just prove that they were included in the class action suit filed against Ferdinand Marcos and his heirs before a Hawaii court shortly after the former strongman was compelled from power in 1986.

In 1992, Hawaii District Court Judge Manuel Real awarded the victims $2 billion in damages after finding the late dictator responsible for summary executions, disappearances and tortures during his 14-year martial rule.

The amount has since grown to $7.7 billion, but the victims have yet to receive their share of the award.

Rosales and Rodriguez are the most prominent leaders of the two main groups of victims. The two groups are at odds over the victim's compensation.





'His children were the people,' says Taruc son

From page A1

was 92.

He took his seat in Pampanga (Nr. 1st District, City) Batasan home scheduled on Sunday at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

"I was not just his only son. He children were the people," Romeo Taruc, 69, a board member of Land Bank of the Philippines, said on the night his father died.

Middle ground

President Macapagal-Arroyo also praised Luis Taruc "not only as a fighter for the poor and the oppressed, but always champion of peace."

"He memory will always remind us that even at times of ideological strife, there is always a solution for rebels and government to pursue a middle ground based on democracy and social justice—for a nation to unite and heal itself," Ms. Arroyo said in a statement.

The Encyclopedia Britannica described the elder Taruc as "a hero of the Philippine anti-Japanese resistance" during World War II.

Born to peasants on June 21, 1913, in the Central Luzon province of Tarlac, Taruc and other communist leaders in 1942 formed the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon (People's Army Against the Japanese). With about 30,000 armed guerrillas, the Hukbalahap became one of the best organized anti-Japanese resistance movements in Asia.

Many post-Senators in northern Luzon and the central Pasay islands were initiated to the Huks because of their emphasis on land reform, and the group established shadow governments in at least five provinces.

Excluded

Although they fought side by side with the American, the colonial masters then, the Huks were excluded from all government posts after the war. Landlords returned to Central Luzon and the military police as well as civilian guards massacred the Huks.

Still, Taruc was drafted as a candidate for congressman by the Democratic Alliance, a loose grouping of progressive professionals who opposed collaborators and sought to cut reforms in the April 1946 elections.

Despite much harassment during the electoral campaign, Taruc and all 261 candidates in Central Luzon won seats in Congress. President Manuel Roxas' Liberal Party, however, pressed a resolution stating those duly elected members and some congressmen, including those from the Democratic Alliance on a grave charge of election fraud.

The move reportedly aroused the passage by Congress of the Bayle Amendment and other unequal treaties that the United States was pushing.

Disappointed, the Huks openly declared their communist orientation, renamed their group Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan, People's Liberation Army, and launched an armed insurrection that some historians consider to be the first armed revolt against the post-war Communist Hire People's Army.

Ramon Taruc recalled that on months that he spent with his father, the Huk supremo, as the commander of Central Luzon in 1951, Romeo was only about 15 years old then.

"It was exciting. We were on the run all the time. Joseph Ejercito Estrada, he said Romeo.

He said his father was a "gentle man" who would cook meals for his friends and fellow guerrillas.

"When I was with him in the mountains, I was often given special treatment by his fellowmen because I was his son. He put a mop on me," the young Taruc said.

Romeo was arrested by the military but was released after a year in various detention camps.

The government under President Elpidio Quirino launched a vigorous 29-behind military campaign against the Huks. In 1954, following months of negotiations, the elder Taruc surrendered Benigno S. Aquino Jr. had served as then Defense Secretary. Ramon Magsaysay's counsels and surrendered The elder Taruc to serve a small Sr.

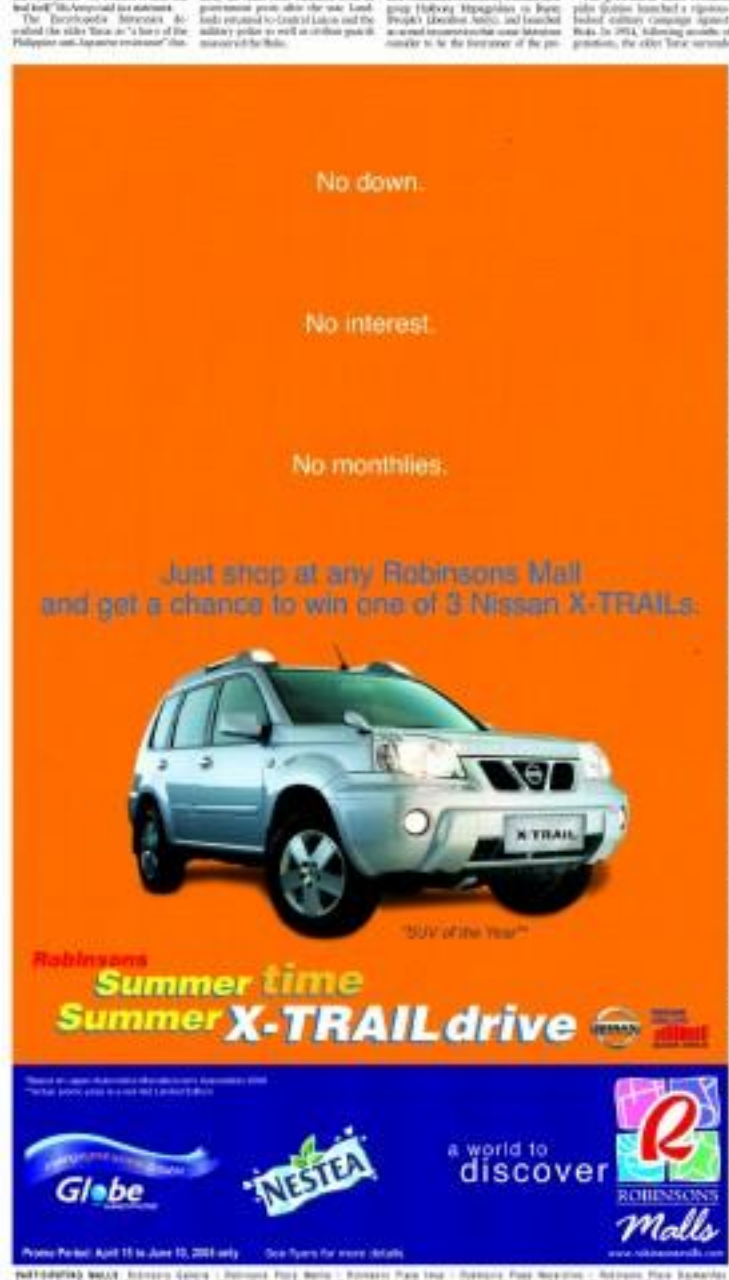
He spent 12 years in prison before being pardoned by the late Ferdinand Marcos.

The elder Taruc spent his retirement relatively quite spending to various civic works.

Survival skills

Last year, at the invitation of running priest Fr. Robert Reyes, Taruc shared his "martime" survival skills during the launching of the Concerned Citizens Bike movement which aimed to inspire Filipinos on boosting their image in a way of urging us to be hard times.

Three weeks before his death, Taruc was still involved in distributing livestock and seeds to the poor, planning to reimburse of cyclonic typhoons he had put up in his home. (Quirico, NGOs report death toll at 187 and 180 dead.)



Despite Iraq . . .

From page A1

cancel or [illegible] consultant in New York City but that nobody was hurt. It was not immediately known whether there was any connection with the election.

Blair, accompanied by his self-Classic, cast a vote in his northern English constituency of Sedgefield, where he is being challenged by several candidates, including Reg Keys, an independent who lost a son in the Iraq war.

52nd birthday

The premier, who will celebrate his 52nd birthday on Friday, voted about three hours after polling stations opened nationwide at 7 a.m. (2 p.m. in Manila).

Blair were scheduled to cheer at 10 a.m. (5 a.m. Friday here), with the winning party likely to be confirmed some time in the early hours of Friday morning.

Michael Howard, the leader of the main opposition Conservative Party, was scheduled to cast his ballot in the southwestern English port city of Folkestone around 2 p.m.

More than 44 million voters are eligible to vote in 659 constituencies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with a vote to one postponed because of the death of a candidate.

Negative, personal campaign

The voting caps a one-month official campaign that was often negative and personal, though the three main parties, including the increasingly popular centrist Liberal Democrats, had been jockeying for position for months.

Blair's Labour Party won landslide victories in 1997 and 2001, but Blair's popularity has soured since he chose to send troops in support of the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

The conflict, and especially Blair's subsequent [illegible] into Iraq haunted the premier throughout the campaign, with Conservative opponent Howard openly labelled him a liar.

Many believe, is full of new opinion polls announced reporters on that Labor was heading for another victory, albeit by a smaller margin than previously.

First time

It would be the first time the party could win more [illegible] since it was founded in 1900.

A vote would also propel Blair into the position of modern British political giants alongside former Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who won three successive terms from 1979 to 1987.

In a polling station in Hammersmith in London, probably the tightest race in London, Ann Wise, 30, cast her vote.

"I voted Liberal, because I'm very much against the war in Iraq, and against Iraq," [illegible] I usually vote Labor but before Blair, I didn't like them," she said. "There's not much difference between Labor and Liberal anyway."

Misgivings over Iraq

Millions of other voters, however, were tipped to stay loyal in recognition of Blair's spending on the government-run National Health Service, and schools and other public amenities.

In contrast to the [illegible] seen in 1997 and 2001, many Britons said they will put their votes next to Labor despite misgivings, notably over Iraq, by voting in some form put it "with a gap on our noses."

Blair himself has warned repeatedly that if enough disgruntled Labor voters, or even those just confident of a Labor win, stay at home, it could bring a "hung Parliament" with no one party [illegible] Conservative Party.

And while [illegible] his set out merely unlikely, but also more than the turnout could really fall below the 59.4 percent seen in 2001, itself the lowest figure since World War I.

Lee Germon, 40, a London-based employee of an American company comparing summed up the jaded mood when she declared she did not expect to vote.

"The campaign has just passed me by. It has not been an old fashioned war as normal. I did vote I would not know who to vote for. It definitely would not be Labor," Germon said.

Election day was [illegible] with several [illegible] two small blasts outside a building that houses the British consulate in New York City in the early hours of Thursday but there were no injuries or structural damage.

Police said a car exploded at 4:30 a.m. (3:30 p.m. here) and police were investigating. Officials said [illegible] confirmed by the British government.

AFP

Ramos slay probers eye rob angle

NBI raises alarm over fake Schengen visas

Couple shot dead in QC robbery

By Tarra V. Quismundo

By DJ Yap

By Tarra V. Quismundo

Fat is not where it's at for contented cop

THE NEW attraction of being thin is shared by (from left) SPO1 Glendale Rosada, PO1 Arlene Cristal and Chief Insp. Maria Cristina Mallonga during a forum yesterday at the New World Hotel in Makati City. The three are among 164 law enforcers who took part in a weight-loss program sponsored by a multinational drug company.

Taguig pledges milk, aid to Gregorio quadruplets

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Legislator wants public parking fees outlawed

By Philip C. Tubeza

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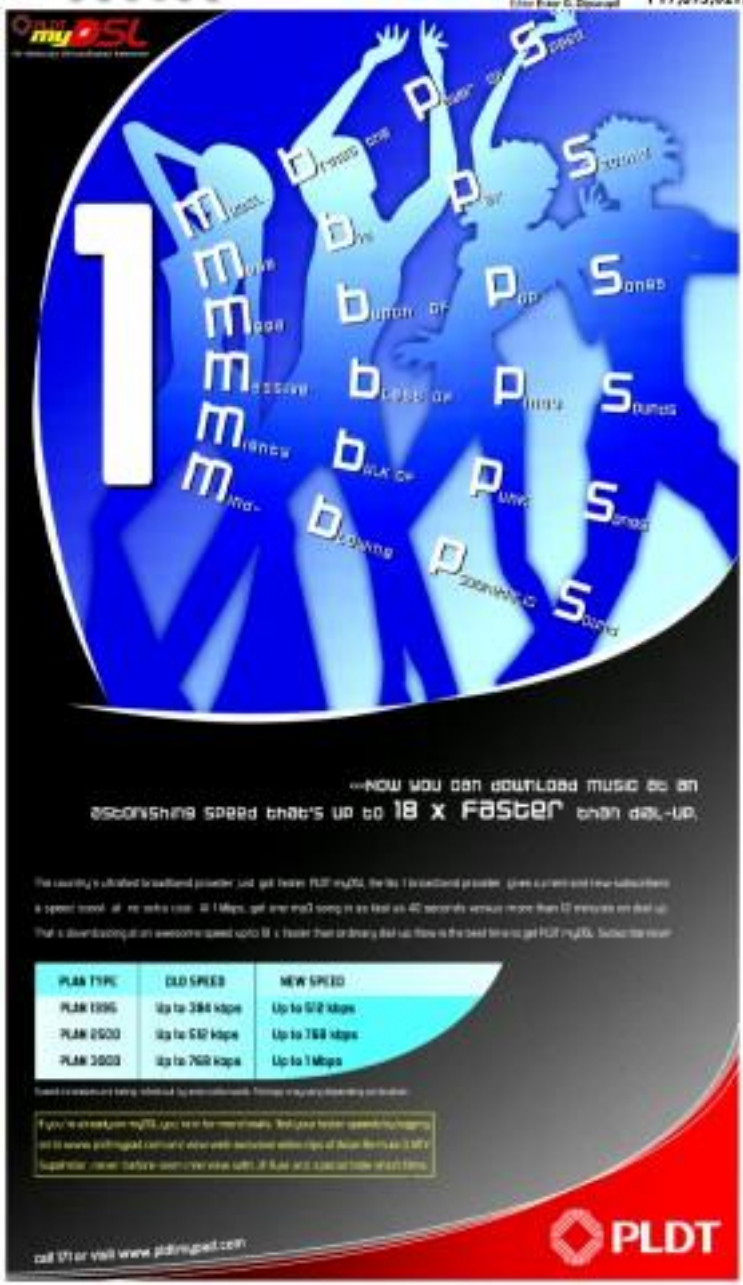
METRO
Editor Peter O. Dizon



Policemen in mistake shooting 'detained'

SO DEMIDSAL, last yet

Three policemen who allegedly shot innocent motorists by mistake in Bataan Thursday have been virtually detained after they were restricted to their offices.

Apparently, the Northern Police District (NPD) is handling by the book the case of the three members of its Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team.

"Pending investigation the policemen have been disarmed and restricted to the office," said Supt. Rodolfo Garcia, NPD director.

Charges possible

Garcia, Gonzales said Police Officers 2 Rodel Bacsa, Wilfredo Ferrer, and Ryan Lysnel could face charges of homicided homicide and grave threats for their involvement in the incident at a shell gasoline station along C-3 Road.

He also said that the three could face possible dismissal from the service if found guilty of opening fire at the FX van carrying members of the Bagtas and Bacsa families.

Though none of the 11 passengers, including a five-year old girl, was hurt, the FX van was riddled with bullets.

The van, police said, was similar to the getaway vehicle of suspects who had robbed a bakery in Caloocan City minutes before the incident.

The Bagtas and Bacsa families were reportedly on their way to San Pablo, Laguna, when they stopped at the Shell station to fill up their tank.

SWAT members pursuing the robbery suspects from Caloocan spotted the FX van at the gasoline station.

Shot without provocation

Believing that the van was the getaway vehicle of the suspects, the policemen opened fire at the vehicle without checking on its occupants.

Upon realizing that they had made a mistake, the policemen allegedly left without a word.

Gonzales said he would wait for the results of the investigation before taking any action against the lawmen.

"I would wait for the investigation report before I make the necessary action," Gonzales said.

The persons should be extended to the policemen involved, the NPD director pointed out.

Pressed to comment on why he had ordered his armed on the SWAT members, Gonzales said, "I don't want to influence the outcome of the investigation."

The case is being handled by Supt. Napoleon Custan, chief of the Intelligence and Detective Management unit of the Caloocan City police.

Refresher course

Gonzales also said that because of the incident, he had directed all SWAT members from Caloocan City, Malabon City, Navotas and Valenzuela City to report to the district office for a refresher course on the rules of engagement.

Apart from the refresher course, the NPD chief said NPD SWAT teams would be undergoing retraining.

"They were supposed to undergo retraining but the lack of logistics had delayed our plans," he added.

The NPD director added that he would seek the help of higher authorities for the project.

"I am sure they would take cognizance of the incidents and would act favorably," Gonzales said.

Lack of training due to scarcity of funds has been a persistent problem of the police. With a C. Estrada

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Cecile S. Mariano

Inflation still at 8.5% in April

By Michelle V Remo

THE CONTINUED rise in oil prices pushed consumer prices up by 8.5 percent in April from year-ago, the National Statistics Office said yesterday.

That was the same as the rate posted in February and March this year. The January inflation was slightly lower at 8.4 percent. The first month average of 8.3 percent was way beyond the target of 5 to 6 percent for the whole year.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) admitted that the rate for the whole year would hover around 6 percent, much higher than the target. However, Neda said the government had measures to change the target.

Victor Abola, economist from the University of Asia and the Pacific, said the government could not do much to control price increases because these were driven by an external factor (oil price movement).

"What the government could do to somehow temper increases in consumer prices was to ensure that peso remained strong against the US dollar. This way prices of imported goods will remain stable," he explained.

The NSO report showed that all commodity groups—except food, beverage and tobacco—posted a higher inflation in April compared with their month-ago levels. The inflation rate for clothing rose to 3.8 percent from only 3.7 percent; housing and repairs, 4.8 percent from 4.7 percent; fuel, light and water, 19.7 percent from 18.3 percent; services, 14.4 percent from 14 percent, and miscellaneous items, 3.2 percent from 3.1 percent.

"Price hikes in gasoline, diesel, engine and lubricating oil and the increased charges for electricity and water in selected regions contributed to the upward movement," the NSO said.

The inflation rate for the food, beverage and tobacco grouping declined to 7 percent from 7.2 percent. But on a month-to-month basis, prices of the FBT group accelerated by 0.3 percent in April from 0.2 percent in March.

For food items, alone, the inflation rate dropped to 9.1 percent in April from 9.4 percent in March. The slowdown was due to the decline in the rates for corn, dairy products, fish, meat and miscellaneous food.

However, higher inflation

[story continues on A2]

Peso gets boost from strong OFW remittances

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO strengthened back to the 53-to-$1 level yesterday on strong inflows from migrant workers and fresh hopes that the investment conference committee would pass the value-added tax reform package soon.

The peso closed at 53.98 to $1 yesterday, up from 54.180 finish on Wednesday. Turnover at the Philippine Dealing System amounted to $376.3 million.

Currency traders said the peso had benefited from the remittances from overseas Filipino workers, mostly for tuition fee payments for the next school year, which opens next month.

They said the 4th-quarter increase in foreign-sourced remittances by Filipino workers, which helped cushion the country's balance of payment targets in a surplus of $902 million, was sending bullish signals to the market.

In the meantime, the Monetary Board, in its monthly policy rate setting meet yesterday, kept its rates steady despite pressures from high inflation and the fresh hike in the US federal funds rate.

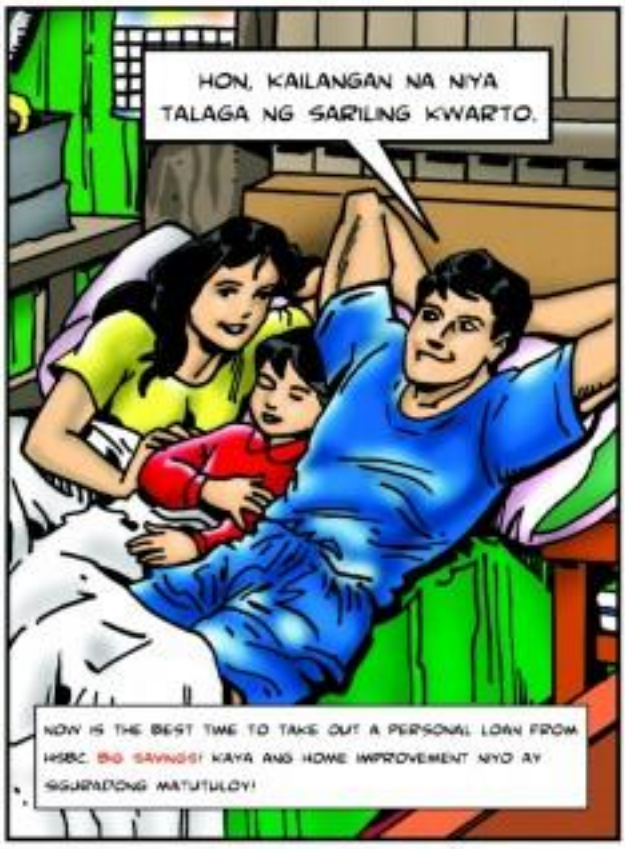
BSP Officer in Charge Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday said the board voted to keep the overnight borrowing rate at 7 percent and the overnight lending at 9.25 percent.

"Latest forecasts indicate that inflation may be heating off and is likely to fall within the targeted 4-5 percent range in 2006 in the absence of further adverse shocks," Tetangco said.

The BSP's policy rates were last adjusted upwards in October 2000 but were since reviewed steadily. The borrowing rate was kept at 6.75 percent and the lending rate at 9 percent from July 2003 until last month.

For its part, the Fed Open Market Committee announced Thursday another quarter of a percentage point hike in its benchmark lending rate to 3 percent. It said future rate hikes would remain "measured," a phrase designed to ease investors' fears of more aggressive increases.

[story continues on B3]



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HSBC
The world's local bank

PLDT posts 65% profit increase

SBC income up 41% in 1st quarter

By Cherwin S. Bakino

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. yesterday reported a first quarter net income of P8.36 billion, up 65 percent from year-ago level, despite slower revenue growth and mobile subscriber take-up.

Taking out one-time foreign exchange gains, PLDT said it during the quarter rose by 15 percent to P7 billion from a restated P6.11 billion a year ago. The growth was attributed largely to the sustained strong performance of its wireless unit.

Smart Communications Inc. ended the first quarter with 16.77 billion in net income or 45 percent higher than P4.69 billion registered a year ago. Its listed unit Philippine Telephone Corp. reported a net profit of P2.2 billion against a net loss of P11 million in the first quarter of 2004.

Smart and Piltel added 1.34 million customers, thus ending the first quarter with 20.24 million subscribers. The subscriber base build-up during the quarter was, however, lower than the net quarterly additions of 1.4 to 1.6 million in 2004.

Similar to PLDT's P2.4 billion non-recurring gain, Piltel's profit in the first quarter was boosted by a one-time foreign exchange gain of P700 million.

PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno said that for every P1 adjustment in the exchange rate, the company gains or loses about P2.16 billion. The peso ended the first quarter at 54.94 to $1 versus 56.20 to end-2004.

The relevant plans, which is 1% percent held by MVT Communications and 24 percent by Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., now has about $1.9 billion to debt. The company is planning to reduce its debt substantially in the one year, such that by the end of 2006, PLDT's debt-to-equity would amount to only $1 billion.

With its debt reduction strategy on track and its cash flow robust, PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan said the board decided to increase the dividend pay out to common shareholders to 65 percent next year, 40 percent in 2006 and 50 percent in 2007. The dividend rates are based on the previous year's earnings.

"The business will grow but probably at a slower pace. I think profits will still grow and cash flow will remain healthy. The other 40 the company remains strong. Declining revenue is an issue that we have to address," said Pangilinan.

The board, said the chair, would stick to a recurring net profit target of P27 billion for the year against P25.17 billion in 2004.

Pangilinan cautioned that PLDT was undervalued at its current share price, believing that the company "should be trading at a higher multiple." PLDT shares closed at P1,018 yesterday, up 45 against the previous day's close.

The company's consolidated revenue rose to P30.25 billion in the first quarter against P30.02 billion a year ago. Wireless revenue managed to grow by 14 percent but sales of the fixed line business dropped 2 percent.

Nazareno said he was not worried as he projected that Smart would end the second quarter with revenue at par with the first quarter's P17.4 billion.

Jollibee Q1 earnings fall 6.2%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FAST FOOD giant Jollibee Foods Corp. said its net earnings dipped 6.2 percent to P556.5 million in the first quarter from year-ago's P582.1 million due to higher cost of operations.

In consonance to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Jollibee said its system-wide sales, covering sales of both company-owned outlets and franchised stores, rose 16.6 percent to P9 billion this year from P7.8 billion last year.

Revenue was also higher by 13 percent to P6.5 billion from P5.8 billion in the same quarter last year.

Tony Tan Caktiong, Jollibee chair and chief executive officer, said he was worried over the short-term effect of high inflation on the company's sales and net profit. He, however, added he was expecting stronger business performance in the long term.

"We continue to be encouraged by the performance of our foreign-king business in China. We're also pleased with the strong start of our new Chowking store in Indonesia and the recovery of Jollibee business in Vietnam, where sales grew by 48.3 percent in the first quarter," Tan Caktiong said.

In the Philippines, where Jollibee operates a total of 1,071 stores, its sales grew by only about half of the growth rate in the first quarter of 2004.

The lower sales growth was blamed largely on inflation pressures on consumer spending.

KING JAMES AUCTION CALENDAR

PRELIMINARY AUCTION

VIEWING DATES: MAY 5-6, 2005, 9:00 A.M.-6:30 P.M.
AUCTION DATE: MAY 7, 2005 (SAT) 10:30 AM

PRELIMINARY AUCTION

VIEWING DATES: MAY 5-6, 2005, 9:00 A.M.-6:30 P.M.
AUCTION DATE: MAY 8, 2005 (SUN) 10:30 AM

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Inflation still at 8.5% ...

From page B1

rates were registered for rice, 8 percent from 4.9 percent; eggs, 3.8 percent from 3.3 percent, and fruits and vegetables, 9.9 percent from 7.4 percent.

Alexis agreed with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas that inflation was still caused largely by supply-related problems rather than demand-side factors. That was why it was not necessary for the BSP to tighten its monetary policy at the moment.

"The BSP should tighten monetary policy if loans are expanding at a fast rate. But for now, loans are only growing by about 13 to 14 percent, so there is no need for the BSP to increase interest rates for the time being," he said.

Alexis said there was no pressure for the BSP to tighten its monetary policy at the moment despite the decision of the US Federal Reserve to increase its rate one to 3 percent. He said the interest rate differential between the United States and the Philippines was still within a comfortable level.

The BSP closely watches its interest rate differential with that of the US Fed to avoid capital flight, or movement of investments away from the Philippines. Capital flight may occur when investors sense all is not a sure risky environment like the Philippines because cases with what is offered in a more stable economy like the United States.

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BSP keeps policy ...

From page B1

its overnight rate unchanged from the Fed's March 22 meeting which noted that long-term inflation expectations "remained well contained" even while admitting that higher energy prices were starting to slow spending growth.

Nonetheless she have enough flexibility to keep monetary policy set long unchanged for the time being. Members of the MB believe that the current policy rate increase should be given time to fully work its way into the economy and exert its impact on inflation, especially," Tetangco said.

Given that demand pressures continued to be softened by sluggish employment conditions, and some capacity utilization and generally modest credit demand, Tetangco said significant monetary tightening was not warranted.

Tetangco said the board, likewise, recognized that the twin spreads in the differentials between the long-term and short-term interest rates and between the dollar and peso is shrinking that long-term inflation expectations remained "anchored."

The MB recognizes that one key risk to inflation is the likelihood of declining interest rate differentials and possible adverse dollar-to-investor sentiment due to delays in needed tax measures.

Testing the Pacific waters

CAVEAT: In a consistent tempest, Pacific Plans has agreed to meet the public tomorrow in a Forum at the Philippine International Convention Center starting at 3 p.m. It was not clear whether rapper Silverio Yarbengco or his lucrative opponent, Robert Y. Ibo, would be there in person to answer questions.

In any case, the lunch-rock atmosphere would presumably have died down with the announcement of a P200 million "bailout support" that the corpus has committed to cover the first semester obligations of Pacific Plans to its open-ended plan holders.

The key AF advisers are hoping that the P200 million support would eventually lead to the Yarbengco-making Pacific Plans wholesome, especially since the gaping plan of saving the Pacific Plans "vision" did exactly the opposite and even made vulnerable the entire AF empire in real estate and even insurance annuities.

According to records with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Pacific Plans reported an unrealized reserve liability of P10.3 billion in 2005, and, after spinning off the good assets, ended 2004 with a much lower P2.50 billion unrealized reserve liability.

On the plus side, Pacific Plans, according to the rehabilitation petition the company filed, had P4.5 billion in Reserve and 8 banks, but only P37 million in cash and P2.5 million in shares of stocks left as of end 2005.

While the company's first pre-need company has no paper enough trust-cash assets to wipe out its P2.403 billion MEL, it clearly does not have the annual cash to meet million obligations from now until 2016, when the Reserve funds shall mature.

The Yarbengco announcement did not say from which pocket the P200 million would be taken, but on the basis of the financial statements of the two publicly listed AF companies, the corpus would need to sell off a few good assets if he would have to have adequate liquidity fast, and also improve his bank's financial ratios.

For now, the rapper's Rural Commercial Banking Corp. is already helping in front-selling.

Moreover, RCBC has still to receive Bangko Sentral approval for its application to extend to 18 years (instead of seven) the asset juices of P5.6 billion in additional allowance for doubtful accounts that the bank has to provide to cover to its disastrous Reserve acquisition.

In the meantime, to engineer his financial cocoa, RCBC had to resort to some creative accounting techniques, a fact that did not escape its external auditors.

"Both the Parent Company (meaning RCBC) fully recognized the required allowance for probable losses amounting to P1.196 billion[] as part of current operations in 2004 in accordance with Philippine GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles), the Group's net income of P1.28 billion would have been reduced by P1.132billion," SGV said in a 2004 footnote.

The good news is that the RCBC Group has more than P12.4 billion worth of unrecovered real estate assets in its inventory that it could soon dispose of in an improving market.

But that might be easier said than done, especially in the small town mining and manufacturing families and relationships.

For instance, the RCBC Group already had a buyer lined up for the unfinished Cebu II building on Ayala Avenue, when, if the market grapevine is to be believed, a bird is said to be the deal-breaking protest from a VIP client.

Cocktales

Walter C. Ignacio

Money-go-round

• THE SUPREME Court has rebuffed Ronaldo Reyes, a son in law of Imelda—and expert musician(ist) Nicholas L. Lim, in his demand in Pt. Lim's Philippine Carpet Manufacturing Corp. to pay his claims of more than P7 million in accumulated vacation and sick leave credits.

Reyes, who retired as chief operating officer of the carpet company in 1996, fought his labor-to-law and the company all the way to the high court to press his claim.

The National Labor Relations Commission had earlier ruled that Reyes, like other top management officials of the carpet making tycoon was entitled to vacation and sick leave credits.

• TELECOMPOOD and the United Laboratories Group will celebrate as one big happy family the 50th year of Unilab at the World Trade Center tomorrow.

Heard through the grapevine

THE BTOOD on Indigo, broadcasted or hailing to soften even a recession in Tuna if not the recalcitrant Bonoy Filipino, has decided to exercise the indefinite waiting suspension of the book shares.

The PSOE book has not filed any financial report with the stock exchange since 2002. Worse, the book has not held any board meeting since last year.

(Email: redmailer_pdi@pldtdsl.net or redmailer_pdi@yahoo.com)

BIR collected P21.34B in taxes last April 15

By Michelle F. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue said it collected P21.34 billion in taxes last April 15, its highest in a single day.

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the tax collection last April 15 was 18.3 percent higher than the P18.037 billion it received on April 15, 2005.

Parayno said the record collection reflected the increase in the income tax remitted by businesses and self-employed individuals.

The P21.34-billion collection for April 15 brought the BIR's collection for the first two weeks of April up to P47.2 billion.

Parayno said the April 15 tax take made the revenue agency more confident of meeting its P625 billion collection target for the whole month.

"The increase [in tax collection] came mostly from voluntary filing. Taxpayers who file their ITRs on April 15 are usually business owners and corporations," he said in a press briefing yesterday.

Income taxes of salaried individuals, which are withheld by their employers, are usually remitted before the deadline, he explained.

BIR Deputy Commissioner Jim Limsiaco said the high tax collection last month was attributed to the government's ongoing campaign for tax compliance.

He cited the BIR's run after tax evaders' program, under which the government files tax evasion charges every week against known businesses or celebrities to discourage tax evasion.

Limsiaco also cited the issuance of Revenue Order No. 2006, which required the submission of income tax returns by all businesses wanting to supply goods or services to the government.

The BIR official also mentioned the circular issued by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas requiring the submission of ITRs before securing bank loans.

The BIR said the programs served as a deterrent in impressing upon the public's mind that the government was serious about changing the culture of tax evasion, and holding tax evaders criminally liable.

The BIR, which accounts for over 68 percent of the national government's revenue collection, is best poised to improve its tax collections this year to help reduce the gaping budget gap, which stood at P187 billion last year.

The Department of Finance, the BIR's head agency, said the government wanted to reduce the deficit to P180 billion, or even lower, this year through the implementation of several legislative measures.

These include the value-added reform plan, which would complement the administrative measures already in place.

The 14th congressional conference Congress would pass the VAT bill, although it was still uncertain whether DOF's version of the bill would be approved by the bicameral conference committee.

The DOF wants the VAT rate raised from 10 to 12 percent, a version approved by the Lower House but trashed by the Senate.

Asian finance ministers to boost currency swap agreements size

ISTANBUL, Turkey—Top Asian finance ministers pledged to boost by up to 100 percent the size of currency swap agreements designed to cushion Asian economies from the instability that helped trigger the region's 1997-98 economic crisis.

Finance ministers from regional powerhouses Japan, China and South Korea agreed to the measures with their counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or Asean, on the sidelines of a conference of the Asian Development Bank.

The measures set Wednesday called on members to boost by up to 100 percent the current network of bilateral currency swaps, which total $39.5 billion.

"The ministers also agreed to adopt 'a collective decision-making mechanism' for implementing swaps "as a first step to multilateralization," according to a joint statement issued after their meeting.

Under the existing arrangement, known as the Chiang Mai initiative after the Thai city where it was first agreed upon in 2000, countries can borrow dollars from others in the group—principally Japan, Korea and China—to cover short-term needs and stabilize currencies during market turmoil.

The Asean members are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

"Member countries intend to enhancement of up to 100 percent increase of the existing individual arrangements, while noting that the size could be flexibly decided by bilateral negotiations," the statement said.

Since the agreements were set, no country has needed to take advantage of them due to the robust expansion of Asian economies.

The ministers noted the region's strong growth last year and said that this year they expected "solid, though moderated, growth." They reiterated their commitment to implement structural reforms and smart policies that would promote domestic growth, as

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Napocor raises P5B from bond offering

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE STATE-RUN National Power Corp. sold some P5 billion worth of bonds to the domestic market yesterday, thus helping the heavily indebted firm partially cover its financial obligations for the year.

There was healthy appetite for Napocor bonds as both the five- and seven-year bonds were oversubscribed.

Tenders for the five-year Napocor bonds totaled P12.941 billion, way above its debt offering of only P3 billion.

On the other hand, the seven-year bonds got P7.86 billion worth of bids, more than the original debt offering of P2 billion.

The five-year bonds fetched a rate of 9.125 percent, while the seven-year bonds were priced at 10.375 percent.

Bloomberg's Napocor bond market showed that the pricier firm, perceived to be a high risk by investors, was steadily winning back market confidence.

Finance Undersecretary Hawas Osorio, in charge of monitoring the finances of government-owned and -controlled corporations, said the pricing of the Napocor bonds was good, adding that the government's target.

The coupon rates for both the five- and seven-year Napocor bonds were lower than the 11.5 percent recorded for the government's regular five- and seven-year Treasury bonds, which were auctioned off last month.

Napocor scored a total of P8.801 billion from both the five- and seven-year bonds.

It only accepted P2.862 billion worth of bids for the five-year bonds, and P3 billion for the seven-year bonds.

INVESTORS snap up bonds issued by state-run National Power Corp.

Nestor Bernardo Jr., vice president for finance of PNOC-EC, said Napocor only decided to accept P2.862 billion from the five-year bonds, out of the planned P3 billion, to send the signal that the government would not allow room for Napocor debt paper to go up too high.

The more than P5 billion raised from the bond issue, and the P8.2 billion to be generated from the recent 20-centavo power rate hike, would reduce the power firm's financing requirement to only about $500 million.

Groups take firm stand on agricultural tariff hikes

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

UNTIL Friday, April 29, two related events occurred in two different parts of the country.

In Cebu, the National Sugarcane Council cited a strong position on the ongoing comprehensive tariff review by the Tariff Commission and the Cabinet-level Tariff Related Committee.

Chair Edwin Andrei said: "While waiting for the promised safety nets, there should be no reduction or increase in tariff rates for the appropriate products, tariff rates should be sustained, but within our World Trade Organization (WTO) bound rates."

The 600 vegetable producers who attended the Nueva Ecija Vegetable Congress also unanimously approved this position.

On the same day in Quezon City, the agri-aid commissioner of the Fair Trade Alliance (FTA), under the leadership of former Sen. Wigberto Tañada, took the same stance.

As tariff lines are now specified for any action whose tariff rates should be increased to the WTO bound rate of 40 percent, conditionary broccoli, potatoes, celery, lettuce, green and red pepper and mushrooms.

The bound rate refers to the maximum tariff that a country can impose under the rules of the WTO.

The applied rate, on the other hand, is the actual tariff rate imposed on specific products.

Most countries' applied rates are close to, or at the same level as, the bound rate in an attempt to protect their local farmers.

For the Philippines, it is wise to increase agricultural tariffs when this goes against the current liberalization trend?

To answer this, we must ask three additional questions:

Is it fair?

Free trade does not necessarily mean fair trade.

In the WTO, when developed countries demand that developing countries bring down their tariffs to lower levels similar to those of the developing countries, they argue that this merely levels the playing field.

But protection is not limited to tariffs alone.

When a developed country has low tariffs, but large subsidies, the latter promotion may give their products to exceed the protection given by a developing country with higher tariffs but very small subsidies.

This is especially true for the Philippines.

In the July 2004 WTO Ministerial meeting in Geneva, where many unbounded tariffings of various other developed countries agreed to a 20 percent cut in their maximum subsidy levels.

A closer examination showed that these levels are even higher than their actual year 2000 subsidy levels.

For example, the United States now has a maximum subsidy level of $38.1 billion while the European Union has $81.1 billion.

The Philippines' subsidy level is only $0.2 billion.

It is clearly fair and very justifiable that we protect ourselves with higher tariff rates to compensate for our lack of subsidies.

Is it allowed?

At the November 2004 Non-Sterile Countries meeting in Geneva, Contributing on Growth, Poverty Reduction, and Human Development" sponsored by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Malaysia, NGO representatives from 11 countries agreed with the following position coordinated by the Philippine Bypass Agriculture representative: "Higher tariffs ... should be allowed to be used against export and domestic subsidies of developed countries. This protects employment and also helps ensure food security.

"Since WTO allows countries to increase tariff rates to WTO bound rates, institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund should not prevent countries from doing so by making this option by making it a condition for loans and assistance."

Wrongly determined tariffs that are lower than the WTO bound rates are therefore not the fruits of WTO, but our own.

We must therefore correct our mistakes. We also hope that the international financial institutions support, rather than reject, this view, if they wish to see a stronger economy that can better pay back their loans.

Compared to Thailand, our applied rates are small below our bound rates.

For agriculture, Thailand's applied 28 percent tariff rate is close to its WTO bound rate of 33.3 percent.

In comparison, the Philippines unilaterally decided on an applied 8 percent rate, well below our 34.7 percent bound rate.

Ironically, we did this even with our agricultural support levels being far less than Thailand's.

Is it needed?

That increased tariffs are badly needed today is proven by many indicators.

In 2002, for every $100 we exported, we imported $64. But for the last seven years, for every $100 we exported, we imported $107. We definitely need higher tariffs if we want food security.

An example is the case of broccoli.

Data from the Bengzon Vegetable Growers' Association show that at the current 7 percent tariff rate, imported broccoli sells at P40/kg. But farmers' total cost is P38.25.

In 2002, for a hectare of 1.25 to 1.5 square kilometers for our broccoli farmers.

The request is that the 7 percent rate be increased only to the WTO bound rate of 40 percent.

This rate is still low, but it conforms to our international trade agreements.

And it can still encourage our farmers to become productive and compete with imports, rather than the current 7 percent rate, which mostly discourages production.

Conclusion

In the ongoing comprehensive tariff review, it is hoped that our government officials generally stop agricultural tariff reductions.

In addition, they should protect previous increases by increasing tariffs for the appropriate and justifiable agricultural products.

Victor Lo and Achelie Santos of the Alabang Grains's Asian Barry said it well in their position paper: "Although by no means the only solution, raising tariffs on agriculture products could help the government generate revenue of this sector by leveling the playing field vis-a-vis importers, and buying much needed time to improve the sectors' productivity efficiency and competitiveness."

(The author is the chair of Agri-watch, a private sector group. He was former Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture, and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatch@yahoo.com or telefax 8924632)

COMMENTARY

LIFESTYLE

Growing up Juliana

Lucy Torres-Gomez's daughter takes after her in the fashion department

Text by Chesha V. Pascual
Photos by Jon Jon Portuguez
Styling by Noel Pangan

"SHE'S like me in that we both like to dress up," says Lucy Torres-Gomez of Juliana, her daughter with actor-husband Richard Gomez.

The only difference is that Juliana's choice runs from more tomboyish Tessa Prieto-Valdes fashionista style, according to the 10-year-old mom.

"She likes to wear her pony clothes and boyfriend cut jeans or shorts," Torres-Gomez adds. "She plays in them. If she likes to wear a dress, I let her. I indulge her because how many times can she wear her pretty clothes?"

Having been here to celebrity parents, the young girl grew up in the glare of flashbulbs following both her parents' good looks—kids always agree she's becoming more beautiful as she grows older—Juliana, at 4 years old, is practically a veteran in front of the lens, having done advertising and fashion shoots since she was in her nappies.

"Shoots are like play to her," says Torres-Gomez. Because she grew up in showbusiness,

(MORE PAGE 12)

I LOVE HOMEY!
On Juliana: Tessuroni multi-crescent cotton tee with graphic print (P395.75) and denim miniskirt with raw hem (P495.75). On Lucy: Patchwork Chinese-collar woven blouse and denim miniskirt

TEA TIME. On Lucy: Herbench yellow button-down shirt (P499.75). On Juliana: Tavarone knit cardigan (P599.75), crewneck tee (P299.75) and Kinderbench pink skirt (P495.75)

SUGAR AND SPICE. On Lucy: Herbench green button-down wrap sleeve shirt (P699.75). On Juliana: Kinderbench tee (P265) and skirt (P445.75)

SHIRT GOT THE BLUES. On Lucy: Herbench top with graphic print (P329.75). On Juliana: Tavarone's dress with satin bow (P695)

MOMMY'S LITTLE GIRL. On Juliana: Kinderbench tee with glittered print (P265). On Lucy: Herbench "Juicy" print tee (P349.75)

PLAYTIME. On Lucy: Herbench vintage-print tee (P329.75). On Juliana: Tavarone's sequined cardigan (P599) and pale-blue tank top (P249.75)

Growing up Juliana

SWEETS CAKES. On Lucy: Herbench Sabrina top (P329.75) and floral skirt. On Juliana: Tavarone's cardigan with crocheted flower detail (P695), floral dress (P695) and Herbench purse (P329.75)

Homepage C2

mom, 'she thinks this is what everyone does, that this is what's normal. When we do a shoot, she'll even ask me if we could take her best friend along."

Painfully shy

Mel many know, however, that the Guimaras-born pol can be painfully shy especially around strangers, clinging to her mom the entire time. A friend's mother says, during shoots, they have to down around to calm the young girl and keep her from throwing a fit.

"Lucy would be very apologetic," says stylist Noel Manuyag. "She'd even ask if we would need to re-shoot if we don't get the shot that we like."

"She got her shyness from me," Tavarone-Gomez explains of her daughter. "Her energy she got from her dad. It takes her some time to warm up to new people. That's why when we do shoots for magazines I always tell them they can shoot toward the end of the shoot for the cover. Her best photos are always when she has adjusted to the crowd."

And perhaps, a dose of something sweet always helps as when up a child. In one of the layouts for this shoot, the young girl is asked to take a bite into one of Glaze's famous macaroons de Paris. For the first time the entire morning, a hint of a smile sweeps across the pretty girl's face.

Typical of young kids, more so an actor's child, Tavarone-Gomez says her daughter also likes to mimic what she sees on TV. "She likes the commercials."

Tavarone-Gomez says Juliana "more into a little boy when she's with her dad. She gets rough. They do things together that I can't do with them. But we also do things together as one unit."

Art classes

Her young daughter has started school, and this assistant break the mother enrolled her daughter in art classes. "She hasn't taken to the sentimental side, though. She dances the flamenco [like me]."

Having Juliana, says the mom, has all the more made her want to have more children. The difficult part is that "I'm always torn between giving in to what she wants and thinking about what would be best for her in the long run. But we'll [cope]."

She adds that compared to her husband, she's more likely to give in to Juliana's wishes.

She does spank, "but only with my hands," admits Tavarone-Gomez. "Most of the time, I ask her to stand in a corner."

When it comes to her child, Tavarone-Gomez says she always looks back to her childhood and learns from how her own mother raised her and her siblings.

"My mom is a very good mother... We were exposed to different things. Everything was moderation. It wasn't, like, no to TV completely. That's how we were raised, and we all turned out okay."

It is Tavarone-Gomez's mom who's her yardstick for being a good mother. "I'd like to strike a balance between being a parent and a friend. That's how we are with our mom. We respect her, and we can tell her everything."

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LIFESTYLE

Summery knits

Lulu Tan-Gan was the featured fashion designer at a recent charity dinner hosted by Manila's expatriate community

UNEVEN neckline and floaty material

HALTER top and shorts

Text by Nina Y. Vergara
Photos by Joseph Agcaoili

KNIT queen Lulu Tan-Gan basked in the glow of raves over by showcasing close to a dozen knitted and airy separates in such summery shades as white, butter yellow and lime green. For the first time in recent memory, the fashion designer known for her Western sensibilities as far as clothes go also presented a terno.

Tan-Gan was the featured designer during a recent charity dinner hosted by Manila's expatriate community at Greenbelt's Jan Garden. Billed as "Serenta Arte," the event sought to raise money to fund art therapy programs

TERNO made of piña and knitted fabric

V-NECKED dress with kimono sleeves

THREE-PIECE ensemble made of various types of knits

HEADSCENCHIEF skirt adds volume.

KNIT wear with Lurex for those summer evenings

Summery knits

Front page

to help street children and children in jail.

The designer's plastic, which she dubbed as her "resort" collection, consisted mainly of asymmetric and hi-necked dresses and blouses with kimono sleeves, some worn over bare dresses and shorts. Apart from the kimono sleeves, held together by such devices as drawstrings and spaghetti straps, a number of dresses were jazzed up with cigarette, cowl necks, ruched bust lines, built-in scales and handkerchief hemlines.

Tan Cruz excelled in layering as well as the use of various knits ready from canvas sleeves thread to keep her pieces interesting. She also added a touch of evening charm to several straplessdresses by incorporating shiny Lurex in the fabric.

For her finale, the designer presented a stylized, complete suit dress with detachable butterfly sleeves that combined jeke with knits. Just like her bra-formed pieces, the suit dress was made from several layers of knitted, asymmetric materials to achieve a twisted, barely-there effect.

After his, it was the children's turn to take center stage, as each group either modeled shop-altered fashions or did their respective takes on folk dances from Indonesia, India and the Philippines.

Facilitating organizations are Childhope Asia Philippines, Hilfswerk Schweizer Austausch, Kooperation Asia and Social Philippines.

E-mail the author at newsgems@inquirer.com.ph

JULIANA takes after Lucy /C1

LIFESTYLE

Advice to aspiring lifestyle writers

IN A RECENT interview for Newsweek magazine's story on lifestyle sections and glossies, its writer **Carmela Bonoan** asked us why many of today's journalists these days want to specialize in lifestyle coverage. What drives them, in essence?

LIFE-STYLED

ITHINK THEY JUST LOVE SHOES

That was news to us. We didn't know that many of them felt that way. Decades ago, I was like an oddball, too. I was the oddball, in the newsroom of some making a pitch for stories on fashion, food, culture and the arts to feed to the home page.

I had to fight tooth and nail for them. (Sometimes quite literally). Lifestyle then wasn't considered mainstream news, it was the "periphery" and is stayed in the periphery, going in unimportant alongside hard news.

In the old Times Journal and the Manila Chronicle, we had to press not only the legitimacy of a lifestyle section, but also that it had the drawing power, both in readership and advertising.

Today Lifestyle isn't only a section, it is a priority coverage of even some weeklies such as Time and Newsweek which put, now and then, stories on health, diet, fashion and the like on their covers.

This didn't happen overnight, though. Through time, media began sensing the pulse correctly—people are into designing their lives. They're after the quality of life, whether it be in food, culture or fashion, even parenting.

Thus lifestyle journalism is proving to be popular among young writers, many of whom think nothing about fashion is all glam, and they can get to wear all those freebie brands.

Read and read more

So before my fab acolytes (me mind along with it), may I give this perhaps unwelcome advice to wannabe lifestyle/fashion journalists (including the published ones)?

1) Know your dangling modifiers before, or even better than, your dangling earrings. Over the weekend, just passing over a book, I saw more dangling modifiers than the chandelier earrings in the Greenhills bargain.

Point is, know your craft—which is writing, in case you're forgetting, and that begins with grammar and it continues with reading. One has to read up to learn to find out (forget) many the reader's tales. We're in the business of information, you have information the readers can use. We have an business writing about business we know little or nothing about.

2) It's a job. You have a job to do. It's not about you in and freebies. Pay your dues first, and if you enjoy the job, better. Enjoy the creative journey.

If you don't have to be a bitch to get noticed. It's not a requirement. If what the job needs is a bitch, you'll be better off as a reporter. (But I don't think the Romanas Reserve of this world let nothing in your lifetime.)

4) Writing is not co-lighting. People want to see your tripod, what you have up there, not your claws. If they wanted claws, they could just adopt a stray cat.

5) Acid usually burns the stomach, leaves nothing for the mind. We're talking writing style.

6) You're not a brand chaperone. Bringing the names of brands in evidence after assignment isn't lifestyle reportage. It's bonus TV shopping.

7) Celebrities come with the territory. If those people have egos bigger than your volcano pits, live with it; they are copy. You're supposed to write them up, not live in with them for life anyway.

8) Rhett and Blue are not the enemy—a couple who has been hotshot, or hotshot, in the local lifestyle scenario. All right, we get the point. It's overkill. It's overdone. The punchline is dead. Now can we move on? What we mean is, nothing is meant to be an art. Character-hunting is not martial arts.

9) Grow up. The fashion runway is not the real life.

14) Respect and be responsible for the written word. People have lived and died for it.

15) Finally, it's not about you. It's about your readers. You don't write just to become a celebrity. You write because you have a duty to your readers.

Thrones out of paradise

Last Sunday, some of Louie Gruet's friends had a sudden change of venue for Louie's birthday celebration—from Boracay to Manila. Friends were supposed to fly to Boracay but just missed out how because Louie was here. They got a bigger surprise—they learned that Louie would lose his Mclaudrie score on the island. It seems he's being kicked out of paradise.

This, while others are on their way to opening in Boracay: **Alvin Caramoan** has just opened his Cafe Lupe there, Larry Cruz is eyeing a Cafe Havana in Boracay.

It's a job, and not about perks and freebies

People are shocking out Lizzy's Hollywood, specifically the access entry and the limousine. And, dining at Havana in the process (yes, you come to Carmela's) overlooking Rizal World can be de-stressing.

Bidding war

We read about the bidding war between People magazine and Us Weekly over the photos of **Brad Pitt** and **Angelina Jolie** "circulating" on the beach—rights may be for split up with **Jennifer Aniston**. Who won? Us (reportedly $1 million bill) over People's $800,000.

E-mail the author at thelma_cuaderno@philo.pbsp-general.com

ILLUSTRATION BY NICK VISTRO

MISS LYCEUM pageant judge Anton Huvenaars, vicemayoralty aspirant Mark Luneta, Disney Garapa and Butch Segovia

MOST Lyceum with Beth Lucianos, All Miss Core student and Miss Lyceum candidate; Miss Wood Dog, All Miss Core student, and Rocco Camille Santos, BS Tourism student

LYCEUM'S first family: Lawyer Bobby Laurel and wife, fashionable Southern lady Jocelyn Garrigues (L, right), with Maria Katrina Castro, Miss Lyceum first runner-up

Another future national beauty queen?

LAST year's Miss Lyceum, Tamera Maria Salgado, a gorgeous BS Hospitality beauty, went on to become Miss Earth 2004.

As this year, organizers of the same exciting Mr. and Miss Lyceum of the Philippines left no stone unturned in coming up with yet another pageant, part of Lyceum's 104 years of excellence from holy orders to now.

Breaking the brilliant pool making the preparations were dozens of student officials, family members and faculty members' Rosemarie Arnaiz, who single-handedly and expertly took care of photo, coordinated the pageant using Kodak EasyShare cameras.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maverick Arnaiz

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare cameras

CHRISTIEN Leonell Pajarito (BS Tourism), Mr. Lyceum 2005; Margie Lane Vedaviel (BS Nursing), Miss Lyceum 2005; Maria Katrina Castro (BS Foreign Service), Miss Lyceum first runner-up; and Toby Vigal (BS Foreign Service), Mr. Lyceum first runner-up

TAMERA Marie L. Salgado, BS in Computer Engineering student and Miss Lyceum 2004, was the Miss Earth 2004 title.

MISS Body Beautiful Contest Queen.

WE LOVE NIKE. Pierre Calderon and Ricky Ramirez

MOTHER and daughter Stephanie and Christina Pigo

THREE JVC (Philippines) Inc. brothers. Lawyer Fumitoo Sakai chair Tsukasuri Nakakura, outgoing president and CEO, and Hideyuki Takada, incoming president and CEO

QUIRQUIZ models Dionne and Dara Calleros show off Nike's new Spring/Summer Collection.

FELIX he's not, but a football enthusiast he is—Pepper Tuchinskie

New love affair

Hey, teenagers, guess what? Nike's got a new love affair. With whom, you may ask. Well, with fashion, that's who.

The world leader in athletic products shifted its focus from the sporting world...into the fashion scene.

Nike's vision allows for the convergence of sport and style, not only at a sports stadium, but even at a chic urban streetwear cocktail. You can easily find Nike's Active Collection's new "sport luxe" in various stores and malls, as well as in the venues for Manila's exquisite nightlife.

During a hot month preview in the biggest nightspot in town, the posh Embassy Club, models, Nike invited 30 of Manila's elite personalities to watch the fashionable premiere event by first gathering to watch Nike's 2005 Summer Collection. Sassy fashion and sport in a creative evening of style.

The collaboration of some of the best in the Philippine fashion industry like Rosanna Roces, Monique Cayetano, Victor Consunji, Tony Tuberon, and my friends pal, Tim Yap, created super dynamic new looks amongst us from the new Active line.

From the versatility of the Sportswear-to-a-Tee to Jeanery, to the beautiful marriage of Espanyol, to the youthful love and joy of Brazilian dance, and to the rich heritage and national love for football, Nike's first offering from its Active Chest...hints at more and more exciting things to come for Filipino fashionistas everywhere! Fashionable and cyber smart brothers Dave & Peter said.

Check out Nike's and dancers 2005 Active collection available at the Nike Athletic stores at S.L. Eastwood Citywalk 2, S.L. Shangri-La Plaza Mall, and S.L. Robinsons Place Manila.

It's already an awesome summer, palengues.

Victory lush

The leader of the pack in bringing the luscious state-of-the-art music technology the one-of-a-kind JVC gave a lush celebration for eight years of success in the Philippines. The fun dinner event was dubbed "Vic" which struck a sweet and delicious balance between the sophisticated fashion designer Frederick Brual, chocolate Lyceum alumnus Rio Amat 10 years of Manila's elite dancers, fun and body expressions director of Marie Bruno, the world-class restaurant and Food Czar, hotelier Robin Hermann, and fun loving guru Armand Garcia, her director for customer relations of Mastercard International, palengues.

A fun national symposium at the foyer of the school's Theodore Kalf followed upon the hours and exciting first impact. The school's top officers and members of its excellent faculty, together with some MBA, had the chance to get to know the up-coming talented women better.

Already, we were told there were already plans to stage an even bigger event next year.

Lemme it to the Lyceum to come up with super cool activities for the school year, palengues.

How you know why Lyceum to get my BIG degree, then, huh.

GREEN Coast Redevelopment Center's (top row) Ted Mechanics, George Sabal, Jesse Sabal, TV's Karina Sanchez, Ollie Sabal Mechanics, and Gina Sabal Rodriguez

SPYGIRGANG, Victor Consunji, Charmaine Palarca, our very own, Tim Yap, Shai Gonzaga's Xeng Zabarte, and top choreographer Bobby Carreon.

WOMEN of substance. Gib Gan's Virgie Ramos with popular Sen. Lui Revilla and JVC's fine lady, Cecelina Sabal

CLOSE-UP TIME. Celine Navarro and Tamara de Guzman

FASHIONISTA Carla Abal and Ana Kalaw

POPULAR couple Dennis Gabaland with Liz Barraza

PREVIEW magazine's hot girls Pauline Bravo and sultry Mia Amboyo

JENNI Epperson at Impressions Shop, with DP Reyes, who reportedly organized the Nike event

THURSD UP! Hans Sobi, Tsukasuri Yokokura, Kazuo Sakai, former President, Fuku'Y. Kazuo and wife, Arcelita Bunoa